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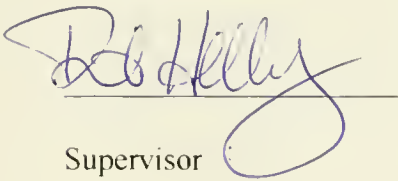


**The Italian Market:  
A Neighborhood Commercial Core**

Simone Elizabeth Monteleone

A THESIS  
in  
Historic Preservation

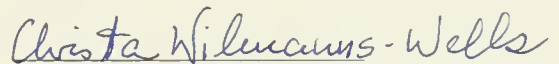
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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE  
1998



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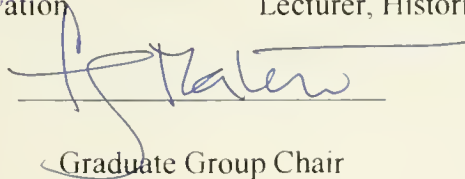
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## Table of Contents

I. List of Figures and Photographs.....	pg. iv
II. Statement of Purpose.....	pg. vii
III. Introduction: The Shopping Experience of Immigrant Families.....	pg. 1
IV. Chapter 1: The Immigrant Experience in Italy and Their First Recollections of Life in America.....	pg. 9
V. Chapter 2: The Italian Market in the Later Years.....	pg. 26
VI. Chapter 3: Plans from the Past and Plans for the Future of the Italian Market.....	pg. 49
VII. Conclusion: The Thoughts of a Preservationist, an American and an Immigrant's Child.....	pg. 69
VIII. Appendix	
a. Census Data.....	pg. 78
b. Building Survey of Italian Market.....	pg. 84
c. Photographs.....	pg. 90
IX. Bibliography.....	pg. 109
X. Index.....	pg. 118



## **List of Figures and Photographs**

1-A. Map of Regions of Italy.....	pg. 12
1-B. Map of Italian Colony Boundaries (Courtesy of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission).....	pg. 18
1-C. Map of Italian Market “Boundaries” (According to Interviews).....	pg. 22
2-A. Giordano’s at Washington Avenue and Ninth Street.....	pg. 28
2-B. Upper Floors of Ninth Street Building.....	pg. 29
2-C. 742 S. Ninth Street - Example of Facade with Two Different Materials.....	pg. 31
2-D. Commercial Building at Catherine and Ninth Street.....	pg. 32
2-E. Zoning Designation for Italian Market.....	pg. 34
2-F. Pigeons at home in the Italian Market.....	pg. 35
2-G. Talluto’s and the Villa de Roma off of Ninth Street.....	pg. 36
2-H. 1016 S. Ninth Street.....	pg. 37
2-I. C & S Discount.....	pg. 37
2-J. Giordano’s in 1974.....	pg. 38
2-K. Fante’s at 1006-1008 S. Ninth Street.....	pg. 39
2-L. Insertion of Display Window on Ninth Street.....	pg. 39
2-M. Ninth Street in 1947.....	pg. 40
2-N. The Ice & Coal Building off between Washington Avenue and Ellsworth Street in 1951.....	pg. 41
2-O. The Ice & Coal Building in 1998.....	pg. 42
2-P. Factory Building on East Side between Washington Avenue and Ellsworth Street.....	pg. 43



2-Q. Ninth Street and Corner of Ellsworth Avenue.....	pg. 44
2-R. The Pushcart Saloon at 1154 S. Ninth Street.....	pg. 45
2-S. Facade Materials Along the Italian Market.....	pg. 47
2-T. Animals Awaiting their Inevitable Doom, the Dinner Table.....	pg. 48
3-A. 1000 Block of Ninth Street in September, 1975.....	pg. 54
3-B. 1952 view of Ninth Street.....	pg. 57
3-C. Ninth Street and Kimball Street in 1952.....	pg. 58
A-1. Ninth Street toward Carpenter Street in 1952.....	pg. 90
A-2. Italian Market Before Easter Sunday in 1930's.....	pg. 91
A-3. South Philadelphia Vendor in 1978.....	pg. 92
A-4. The Perseverance Iron Foundry, off Passyunk Avenue between 8th and 9th, 1916 Hexamer Map.....	pg. 93
A-5. The American Cigar Company and Curtis Publishing Company off of Washington Avenue, 1916 Hexamer Map.....	pg. 94
A-6. Caleb J. Milne & Sons' Mill off 10th Street and Kimball, 1916 Hexamer Map.....	pg. 95
A-7. Southwark Ice Co., John Wyeth & Bro. Inc and McCracken & Hall Fancy Cabinetware Factory, 1916 Hexamer Map.....	pg. 97
A-8. American Ice Co. off Ninth Street, 1916 Hexamer Map.....	pg. 98
A-9. Knickerbocker Ice & Coal Co. off Ninth Street. 1888 Hexamer Map.....	pg. 99
A-10. William Bryant Coal Yard off Ninth Street, 1888 Hexamer Map.....	pg. 100



A-11-A-14. Details of side wall of 1025-1021 S. Ninth Street.....	pg. 101-104
A-15. Detail of Cornice along Ninth Street.....	pg. 105
A-16. Detail of Facade Materials along Ninth Street.....	pg. 106
A-17. Cornice Detail along Ninth Street.....	pg. 107
A-18. Detail of Cornice along Ninth Street.....	pg. 108





## Statement Of Purpose

Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty are not only important historic resources in and of themselves. They have been a powerful tool in describing the immigrant experience to the United States and visitors, but preservationists have been neglecting another integral portion of their stories. The neighborhoods where those immigrants lived, worked and shopped have been studied by social and ethno-historians for decades.

What of the preservationists? These neighborhoods often tend to have little of significant architecture in the sense of high style landmarks and have often been transformed as each ethnic group who inhabited the area adapted the buildings to their needs. The vernacular architecture of these neighborhoods also offers special challenges to the preservation field. Some of the best known of these neighborhoods have been occupied by several successive generations of early ethnic groups and newly arriving immigrants. The neighborhoods are not necessarily abandoned or in need of revitalization and adaptive re-uses for their buildings. Chinatown in New York City is an example of a vibrant neighborhood whose importance to the Asian-American community is evident in their growth in both population and land absorption.

In South Philadelphia, the Italian Market, located on Ninth Street between Fitzwater and Federal Street, has been a stronghold for the Italian-Americans since the turn of the century. The commercial core of the Market has primarily served as the neighborhood shopping mecca for the surrounding community. Its importance as a shopping destination is revealed through the numerous businesses who have remained in operation throughout the decades. The cultural and ethnic importance of the Market is brought forth by the continuous presence of the Italians and their successive generations. Immigrants were a permanent and influential force in Philadelphia and the protection of



the identifying parts of their neighborhood will help to interpret their story to the public.

The Italian Market area is undergoing a refurbishment project to clean up the market and attempt to present a unified “package” to current and potential customers. The Philadelphia architectural firm, Cope-Linder Associates, has been hired by the Italian Market Business Association to create the plan that will be implemented in 1998, with advice from the City Planning Commission and partial funding from the Philadelphia Commercial Development Corporation. The canopies and awnings are to be restored or replaced to assist the Market in improving and cleaning up their image. The neighborhood around the market has been evolving which is evident from the residents of the community, the mix of the shops along Ninth Street and the customers who shop in those businesses. The question is where is the neighborhood going in the twenty-first century and how will the Italian Market reflect this transformation? The businessmen and Cope-Linder Associates are hoping to refine the “rough edges” the Market now portrays and by improving its image, increase the number of customers and tourists.

On any given weekend, the market is streaming with customers of all ethnicity and age, going from vendor to vendor in search of the freshest vegetables and fish. In fact, one can often choose the best chicken by pointing it out as it runs down Ninth Street. A danger that faces the market is that it could move away from being a central food market into an overly managed tourist attraction. The need for necessary repairs to the buildings is apparent from the sidewalks and the vacancies of the upper floors pose a problem as well. These issues are touched upon by the Cope-Linder Associates proposal, but it is not a main focus. Does this mean that the market is destined to become like Little Italy in New York City, an “ethnic theme park” for those who want a taste of true “Italian-ness”?

The Italian Market is a thriving business district and open - air market for the



South Philadelphia community. Transformation is inevitable since the nature of immigrant neighborhoods is to change when new ethnic groups move in and the needs of the community shift. The question is whether preservationists can help the Market manage this change.

I will be looking at the stories of immigrants who had settled the Italian Market neighborhood and examine their experiences in their villages in Southern Italy. In order to truly understand how the Market was transformed into an Italian enclave, it is essential to understand where and what these people experienced in their hometowns. From that point, I will be studying the Market's buildings today to see how they have evolved. These buildings are the eyes and ears of the neighborhood's transformation throughout the twentieth century. If the buildings' character does not survive, then the Market's integrity will be gone forever. Finally, I will be comparing the City Planning Commission's 1978 plan for the Italian Market to the Cope-Linder Refurbishment Plan that is to be implemented by the end of 1998. Both plans call for a number of improvements to the area, but preservation has not been addressed in either.



## **Introduction:**

### **The Shopping Experience of Immigrant Families**

“Good Morning Frank. How are you doing?”

“I’m o.k. What could I get ya’ this morning?”

“I need a pound of sweet sausage, pepperoni and a pound of Proscuitto.”

“Comin’ right up.”

This conversation was often the opening statements of our Saturday excursions to the market for our weekly groceries. My siblings and I would trek down three blocks with my mother to D’Alessandro’s Meats, our first stop in a long day of shopping. The concept of going to a large supermarket for all of our family’s needs was not encouraged by my Italian father and grandmother. My mother, an immigrant from Saarbrücken, Germany, accepted the rule and as long as I could remember our Saturdays were spent in the various specialty stores in Queens, New York. Besides the shop for the meats, we stopped in a pasta shop for fresh pasta and cheese, a bakery for fresh bread and desserts and then the supermarket for everything else. The neighborhood shops were an integral part of our community and they were patronized by the local residents. Eventually, my family moved out of the neighborhood into the suburbs of Long Island. Our house was no longer within a close distance of the specialty shops our family had, for so many years, shopped at religiously each Saturday. The large supermarket, with a deli, butcher and bakery inside, became our new Saturday destination, with an occasional trip to the shops in Queens for holiday and special occasions.

In today’s world of huge supermarket chains, Wal-Marts, K-Marts and bulk distributors, the idea of roaming the neighborhood “mom and pop” shops seems a bit old





fashioned to some. The easiness of getting everything you need in one location has been readily accepted by suburbanites and a growing number of city dwellers as well. The infiltration of these stores in urban neighborhoods support this statement to the dismay and sometimes destruction of the smaller shops. One of the defining aspects of ethnic and urban neighborhoods throughout numerous cities, such as South Philadelphia, are the neighborhood markets. The “mom and pop” shops of the community primarily cater to the specific needs of the immediate area, and often times what is found in those shops can’t be found in the more generic supermarkets. The shops’ intimate setting also allows for more neighborhood interaction that is often not experienced in the larger stores. Richard Gambino, in his book Blood of my Blood, recalls a shopping excursion in the local neighborhood with his grandmother.

My grandmother would walk in a store or shop, ignore the proprietor- in our area virtually always Italian - and peruse the store’s merchandise with the most casual, haphazard manner she could affect. In the custom of the old land it was her role not to seem terribly interested in buying and certainly not to tip what she was after. And it was the merchant’s role to guess exactly what she wanted. After a while my grandmother would begin to ask the prices of items she fingered suspiciously, indicating they were obviously inferior. In response to each reply she would immediately unhand the item in question, her every facial and bodily nuance saying that it was repulsive in quality and its price a moral outrage.....Starting at outlandish extremes, she and the merchant would bark out final prices... Often at a critical point my grandmother would abruptly call to me, “Andiamo!” We would head rapidly to the door as if totally affronted and turned off... After a bit more of the game a sale



would finally be made.<sup>1</sup>

The idea of a scene such as this happening in an Acme Supermarket is unimaginable. The local shops give merchants and customers the opportunity to interact in a way that can't be experienced in other settings. Haggling with the vendors over their merchandise as described by Mr. Gambino and his grandmother is not as common an experience in the Italian Market. On the other hand, I have seen the vendors screaming out to the customers about their prices in an attempt to convince them to shop at their stand.

The similarities of the establishment of ethnic neighborhoods and their vital commercial cores can be witnessed across all different cities and ethnic groups. Little Italies, as well as Chinatowns, are just two examples of twentieth century ethnic neighborhoods that have maintained their own enclaves within an urban environment. These neighborhoods were often very high in density in comparison to the rest of the city and, due to economic factors and ethnic bias, their residents were often forced to remain in them.<sup>2</sup> Although there were negative aspects to the establishment of these neighborhoods, their importance to the residents and the arriving immigrants was vital. The Italian neighborhood of South Philadelphia became a destination point for newly arriving Italians to Pennsylvania, and its importance as an Italian urban core has continued throughout the twentieth century.

More often than not, the immigrants followed relatives or people from their town that had arrived in America earlier. For example, Mr. Frank Cuneo's grandfather had arrived in South Philadelphia in 1845 after landing in New York. After six years of

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Gambino, *Blood of My Blood*, (Toronto: Guernic, 1997) p. 167.

<sup>2</sup>Kuo-Wei Chang, Restoration and Design Project for Philadelphia Chinatown, (University of Pennsylvania: Historic Preservation Thesis) p. 8.



working and establishing himself in what was then known as Irish Town, he sent for his family of twelve.<sup>3</sup> This type of immigration was the normal route for a number of families. The steady flow of individuals and families into concentrated neighborhoods is what helped establish the ethnic enclaves that Americans have come to understand and recognize.<sup>4</sup> This pattern of immigrant settlement continues today with immigrants from the Sub-Continent and South East Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America.

South Philadelphia's Italian Market has been one of the main commercial cores for the Italian immigrants and the subsequent Italian-American community since the beginning of the 20th century. The Italian Market has always had a variety of stores ranging from spice shops, to meat markets, cheese shops, bakeries, fish markets and the continual presence of the pushcart turned permanent vendors. These vendors line the east side of Ninth Street and sell their wares to the passing shoppers.

The Italian-American businessmen had kept the Market primarily under Italian or Sicilian control since it was established in the early decades of this century. The businesses and properties are usually passed on from generation to generation. Changes are slowly coming to the Italian Market. In 1983, the Market introduced its first Korean owned establishment at 1000 S. 9th Street.<sup>5</sup> The number of non-Italian owned businesses has increased since 1983 revealing a shift in the presence of the Italian-American residents. Italians were not the first group to settle in this area of Philadelphia, nor are they likely to be the last ethnic group to be dominant.

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<sup>3</sup> This interview and the following throughout this report (unless otherwise indicated) were recorded as part of the Works Progress Administration between 1938-1941. The ethnic survey covered immigrants who had settled in the South Philadelphia area. A. Fanelli, Interview with Mr. Frank Cuneo, April 18, 1940.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Juliani, The Social Organization of Immigration, (New York: Arno Press, 1980) p. 167.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Labolito, Photographer. He was taking a series of pictures in the early 90's of the Italian Market shop owners.



Irish, German and Jewish groups had previously occupied this area around Ninth Street, but they were eventually replaced by the large number of Italians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>6</sup> Immigrants tended to cluster amongst their own people and in some aspects they truly had no choice. The neighborhoods they chose were often based on their need to be as close to their extended families and related institutions as possible. For example, the Church of St. Mary Magdalene de Piazza, established in 1853, was the first Catholic Church in Philadelphia dedicated for the primary use of the Italian-American population.<sup>7</sup> At that time, the city of Philadelphia's Italian population hailed primarily from Northern Italy and they were spread throughout the city rather than clustered together in South Philadelphia. But by 1890, an Irish priest from South Philadelphia wrote, "Whole Streets formerly occupied by Irish-American families have become populated by Italians."<sup>8</sup> In the 1880 Census, 734 S. 9th Street was inhabited by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Burke with their children Lizzie and James. Joseph was from Ireland, his wife and daughter were from Scotland, and his son was born in America. In the 1900 census, that same address was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Morris Libiger from Russia. They had a number of renters living in the building: thirteen occupants hailed from Russia while five had immigrated from Italy. According to the U.S. Census records, the number of first and second generation Italians in the whole Philadelphia area were 76,734 in 1910 and 136,793 in 1920.<sup>9</sup>

The importance of the neighborhood connections and the economic factors limiting the choices of the ethnic families began to fade away as time passed. With each

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<sup>6</sup>Richard Juliani, The Social Organization of Immigration, p.185-186.

<sup>7</sup>Joan Younger Dickinson, "Aspects of Italian Immigration to Philadelphia," The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography (Philadelphia: 1966) p. 452.

<sup>8</sup>Joseph L.J. Kirlin, Catholicity in Philadelphia from the Earliest Missionaries Down to the Present Time (Philadelphia, 1909) p.449.

<sup>9</sup>U.S. Census Records, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920.





successive generation moving further away from coming “straight off the boat”, the attractiveness of “better” neighborhoods in the city and suburbs began to pull Italian-Americans out of the South Philadelphia area. As families began to move out, other residents followed and mimicked the “chain migration” that brought their ancestors to South Philadelphia at the turn of the century. This migration occurred not only in South Philadelphia but in other older ethnic neighborhoods as well. The neighborhood of Rego Park, Queens, where I grew up, was once primarily an Italian-American and Jewish community. My grandparents have remained in the area while my father, uncle and aunt moved out into the suburbs in the mid-eighties. The community has now become populated primarily by Asian-American and Middle Eastern families.

Richard Juliani states, “The community that began more than a century ago as an immigrant colony before evolving into the ethnic neighborhood of more recent years is now reaching its final stages.”<sup>10</sup> The final stage that Juliani is speaking of, is the mixing of the community and its lack of “purity” in the Italian-Americans’ dominance. The Italian influence over the Italian Market and surrounding area east of Broad and north of Federal Street is beginning to wane, but the associated characteristics of the neighborhood itself are not necessarily ending. The area, like all immigrant neighborhoods, has always been one of transition, with ethnic groups establishing themselves and bettering themselves financially and socially before moving on. Is this not what is happening in South Philadelphia and the Italian Market today? The enrollment in the public schools of the South Philadelphia/ Italian Market area is a good indicator of the transition that is happening in the study area. Between 1990 and 1997, the Meredith, Jackson, Kirkbride, Nebinger and George Washington Schools have had an

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<sup>10</sup>Richard Juliani, Community and Identity: Continuity and Change Among Italian Americans in Philadelphia, (Paper from Second International Italian/Italian American Seminar, 1995) p. 2.



enrollment average decrease of ten white students, an increase of seventeen black students, an increase of sixty Hispanic students and an increase of seventy-two Asian students. Although the Italian-American influence has remained stable for the longest period of time, it appears other ethnic groups are preparing to move in and establish themselves in the sections that the Italian-Americans have left behind.

Will these changes affect the Italian Market and change the consumer its merchants are trying to market to? Evidently, the owners, by initiating another study, have decided to move in a direction enabling them to attract more people from outside of the neighborhood. The study was conducted by Cope-Linder Associates and the City Planning Commission. It is similar to the request made by the merchants in 1978 which had resulted in a City Planning project.

The merchants of the Italian Market had always relied on the regular crowds which have shopped at their stores throughout the years. They have noticed within the 1990's an increase of tourists in the Market. Cultural and heritage tourism has been touted by Mayor Rendell for a number of years, and the merchants evidently want to have a piece of the growing tourist pie. The 2.5 million dollar Cope-Linder refurbishment plan is underway with the recent completion of the sewer and water main improvements. The Italian Market is preparing a major overhaul of its image and outlook to the neighborhood and public as a whole. This thesis will be taking a critical look at the proposals by the architects Cope-Linder Associates and the City Planning Commission. Historic preservation has not been a main consideration in the plans for the new Italian Market, but it should be addressed.

The Market is an integral part of the city, and its important role in telling the history of the Italian-American population in Philadelphia is obvious. The buildings



along Ninth Street are one of the characters of an important story that needs to be told about the South Philadelphia area and the families that lived and shopped along that street. The new millennium will bring changes and transformation that will reflect upon the Market as it did this last century. Will the story now be told or left to be forgotten with the passing of the old Italian-Americans in the neighborhood and the new focus of the Italian Market?



## **Chapter 1:**

### **The Immigrants' Experience in Italy and their first Recollections of Life in America**

The Italian Market and its rapid growth has been a testament to the infiltration of the Italian immigrants into South Philadelphia. The Italians who had immigrated to America were from the southern portions of Italy and Sicily, which have always been primarily an agricultural or sea-based economy. The explosion of the industrial economy in Philadelphia transformed the city into a mecca for low-skilled factory workers. The farming that the Italians had experienced in Italy was not to be repeated in the streets of Philadelphia, but their ability to adapt allowed them to prosper in America.

Mr. Capobianco had emigrated to the United States from St. Andrea in the province of Avellino. He explained that the village had no market place because of the small population and most people bought their food straight from the farms. A general store in the village would sell housewares and staple foods such as macaroni, rice and sugar.<sup>11</sup> Mr. Capobianco, a cigar maker from 824 S. 8th Street, is one of thousands of Southern Italians who settled in the South Philadelphia area around what is now known as the Italian Market. The key to understanding the evolution of the market and the neighborhood is to study what the immigrants' experiences were in the villages of the old country. It is also important to acknowledge the different regions that the Italians emigrated from, because their experiences were varied in comparison to one another. Assimilation into American culture was inevitable for the Southern Italians, but their family values and village experiences influenced the transition of the South Philadelphia neighborhood from an Irish enclave into a 'Little Italy'.

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<sup>11</sup> A. Farrell, Interview with Mr. Pasquale Capobianco, August 29, 1940.





One of the unifying aspects of Southern Italians and Sicilians was their dependence on the land and the sea. The Northern Italians, especially the Genoese who were among the first Italian settlers, were highly skilled and educated. They emigrated to the United States in larger numbers in the mid nineteenth century, but the second wave of Italian immigrants included their countrymen from the South, who emigrated in even greater numbers toward the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The Southern Italians and Sicilians were mainly villagers that farmed or fished and had little formal education. These are the skills that a majority of the immigrants brought with them to Philadelphia. These skills had little use in the factories and sweatshops of Philadelphia. As an immigrant group starting out among the lowly population, the Italians were eager for jobs just like the Irish before them. Fortunately, some of the Italians and Sicilians worked on farms and small plots of land on the outskirts of town. If the customer's would not come out to them, then the farmer would need to bring his produce into the city.

The need for a village market in which the farmers sold their wares was unnecessary in most villages. People either grew their own food or went to the farms to buy what they needed directly from the farmer. "There were no vendors of food and vegetables, although there were vendors who sold dry goods and these vendors carried their wares on their shoulders as they went through the streets of the village."<sup>12</sup> Mr. Tony Toto, who emigrated from Sicily, recalled how meat was costly and was only eaten on special occasions or on holidays. There was no baker in his village, so residents baked their own bread; fresh fish was available every Wednesday. The sea was only nine miles from the village and the vendor would carry the fish in a basket on top of his head.

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<sup>12</sup> A. Fanelli, Interview with Mr. Tony Toto, August 7, 1940.



Walking barefoot, the vendor would arrive in the village with bleeding feet from the stones on the road.<sup>13</sup>

According to John Carsillo, an immigrant from the town of Cariffe, also from the province of Avellino, his village was supplied with fish from the rivers in and around Cariffe. 'Market hawkers' were unnecessary in the village because of price controls by the government.<sup>14</sup> In comparison, the Italian Market became a haven for vendors and they quickly learned the benefits of a capitalistic society. A gentleman who had a fish stand at 1137 S. 9th Street stated that the markets back in Sicily never had the variety and abundance of fish, nor the competition, that was to be found in South Philadelphia.<sup>15</sup> The experiences back in Italy and Sicily might have differed from what was eventually created in the Market, but the basic principle was the same. The vendors in South Philadelphia not only sold dry goods, like in Italy, but they took over the principle role of the families' plot of land. The vendors were now where the produce was "harvested" for the thousands of Italian that were living around the Market.

In comparison to South Philadelphia, Mr. Louis Romolio stated that the main occupation of Rapina in the province of Abruzzi, from where he emigrated, was farming. There, a majority worked their own piece of land, which produced enough food to supply the needs of their family. The remainder was sold to pay rent and other expenses. Even those who did not own their land worked the farms on a fifty-fifty basis with the landowners. In this particular town, there had been a large market in the town piazza

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid, pg. 2.

<sup>14</sup>Palazzi, Interview of John Carsillo, July 19, 1940.

<sup>15</sup>Palazzi, Interview of fish vendor, July 18, 1940.





FIGURE 1. *Regional Map of Italy*

Figure 1-A: Map of the Regions in Italy

where local farmers brought their surplus. The housewives would go to the market for their needs of the day and to gossip with friends. There were no street vendors and fish was brought to the market on Wednesdays and Fridays. In this part of Italy, fish was an important staple of the villagers' diet. Callamari (squid), buccalagia (snails), sardines, ammarino (shrimp), anguilla (eels), buccumi (shell similar to a conch shell), and stocco (cod fish) are just a few of the fishes that they ate in Italy and were available in South



Philadelphia as well.<sup>16</sup> Milk was rarely used, but when needed it was often obtained from a local farmer's goat.<sup>17</sup>

The peasant in Southern Italy sometimes had options of other types of work than farming or fishing. The peddler, traveling artisan or small shopkeeper were available in some instance to those of peasant origin. Apprenticeship for young boys was the key to the technical vocations such as watch making, shoemaking or tailoring. These skills allowed the *mestieri girovagli* (traveling artisan) to demand a higher wage than the peddlers who often worked within one village or town. The shopkeeper was specialized in a particular product as well, which helped to establish their business in one location rather than moving about like the artisan.<sup>18</sup> These three careers could primarily be reached by those who had parents which arranged for an apprenticeship, a skilled worker who had something to offer to a village or an individual who had the foresight to take advantage of an opportunity.

Alfio Casella, from Garife, Catania in Sicily, experienced his younger years in a large village whose main economic stability lay in the lemon industry. Most villagers were lemon pickers, lemon peddlers or squeezers for the distilleries. The farmers of this town would bring their products to the town center each day.<sup>19</sup> The shopkeeper in Southern Italy was similar to one in Philadelphia by offering what was needed or desired by the villagers. The peddlers of the village would trade in water (which was very scarce in Southern Italy), herbs, umbrella mending, lemons, cat-skins and octopi, to just name a few products. They would wander the town and call out their wares to the various women of the village. These peddlers worked independently of each other, with no need for trade

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<sup>16</sup>A. Fanelli, Observations, August 19, 1940.

<sup>17</sup>A. Fanelli, Interview with Louis Romolio, August 23, 1940.

<sup>18</sup>Phyllis H. Williams, *South Italian Folkways in Europe and America*, (New York: 1938) p. 25-27.

<sup>19</sup>Palazzi, Interview with Alfio Casella, July 22, 1940.





unions or business organizations. In America, and the Italian Market in particular, the Southern Italian and Sicilian peddlers were transplanted to the ethnic neighborhoods in which the Italians settled.<sup>20</sup>

The villages in Southern Italy were often a complete entity unto themselves. The village formed the social center and circumscribed the social horizons of the residents. They depended on the village's resources for economic support, and often marriage was restricted to members within the village. In Italy, the farmers who did not own the land they worked on most often lived within the village. Every morning the workers would leave the villages for the respective farms on the outskirts of town. The urban farmers' life outside of the work centered around the village. It was the geographic locations and economic hardships which often isolated these villages from each other.<sup>21</sup> The village characteristics were transported to America and evolved in a different form. The topography was no longer the reason for their isolation but instead their need to create an enclave which attempted to reestablish the importance of the *campanilismo* (a sense of regionalism - translated as "sound within the village bell").

In America, the neighborhoods' isolations often existed because of ethnic hostilities against them, economic factors and the temporary need to shield the immigrants from the society around them. The desire to stay close to their *paesani* where they were confident that the traditional values brought over from Italy would be unquestioned was one of the essential reasoning for shielding themselves.<sup>22</sup> The behavior of the American people was considered very strange by the immigrants and there was a need to slowly assimilate themselves into the new culture. The immigrants' life centered

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<sup>20</sup>Phyllis H. Williams, p.27-29

<sup>21</sup>Williams, p. 9. A portion of the statement was also supported by Lopreato, p. 40-41.

<sup>22</sup>Environmental Research Group, South Philadelphia Historic Sites Survey: Volume I, (Philadelphia: 1980) pg. 154



around the neighborhood with their jobs often close, by since South Philadelphia was at the center of the industrial core of the city. The Little Italy of South Philadelphia became an Italian haven for the immigrants within the city limits.

Emily Wayland Dinwiddle described Philadelphia's 'Little Italy' by observing, "The black-eyed children rolling and tumbling together, the gaily colored dresses of the women and the crowds of street vendors all give the neighborhood a wholly foreign appearance."<sup>23</sup> Her assumption of the streets appearing "wholly foreign" doesn't correspond with the description of village life by the immigrants themselves. One obvious and definitive difference between the Southern Italian provinces and Sicily and South Philadelphia is the absence of farms and the high density of living within the 'boundaries of Little Italy'. In one particular block in South Philadelphia (bounded by Carpenter, Christian, South Eighth and Ninth), Ms. Dinwiddle found that seventy-three of the one hundred and sixty-seven occupied dwellings visited were rear buildings. Few had proper ventilation or light and a number of occupants needed to have a lamp burning all day long. An additional factor adding to such density was the taking in of boarders in an already crowded apartment.<sup>24</sup> She took notice of the business dwellings being especially sturdy with many Italians living over the stores. Of that block studied by Ms. Dinwiddle, a third of the men were peddlers, vendors and merchants; a third in skilled labor and another third were unskilled laborers.<sup>25</sup>

In 1845, Mr. Frank Cuneo's grandfather arrived in New York City from Certenoli, Italy. New York was soon left behind and he arrived in Philadelphia, a city

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<sup>23</sup>Charities, Vol. 12 (1904), pg. 490.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid. pg. 491.

<sup>25</sup>Emily W Dinwiddle, Housing Conditions in Philadelphia: An Investigation made By her under the Octavia Hill Association. (Philadelphia, 1900) p. 2-4.



with no established Italian colony at that time. South Philadelphia was known as Irish Town, with a few German families living in the area as well. Irish Town was between Sixth Street and Broad Street, bounded by South Street to the North and Wharton Street to the South.<sup>26</sup> His grandfather's introduction to America, the land where the streets were paved with gold, was the immediate need for him and his friend to beg for food.

Unfortunately they didn't speak any English and had to rely on pointing to their open mouths and rubbing their stomachs. Some kind Irish folks took pity on the visitors, fed them and assisted them in adjusting to their new surroundings. This led to the two Italians believing that America was truly the land of opportunity, because they were given food by simply asking. Mr. Cuneo's grandfather eventually began to cultivate a small plot of land on the outskirts of town and traded his surplus food with the sailors that had arrived by the Delaware River. He was soon able to rent a house, where he supplied lodging for the sailors and made a bit more money. After six years, he sent for his family back in Italy.

According to Mr. Cuneo, his grandfather stated that the Italian colony in Philadelphia didn't really establish itself until the late 1870's. The boundaries became Fitzwater to the North, between Sixth and Eighth Street and Carpenter to the South. The first Italians to settle in the new "colony" were the Genoese (from the North), and their main occupations were as fruit peddlers selling door to door. In the late 1880's early 1890's, the Italian colony expanded south to Washington Street and west to Ninth Street. Hostilities supposedly began to flare up at this time because of the Italians beginning to outnumber the Irish. The Italians' businesses were causing problems in the neighborhood

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<sup>26</sup>Please Note: The boundaries of Philadelphia's Little Italy are primarily the information relayed by the interviewees. Each person's recollection of the boundaries is based solely on their experience and not on an "official" designation.



because the Italian residents were primarily patronizing the Italian storekeepers.<sup>27</sup> There was a story about a South Philadelphian Italian who had seen his first stalk of bananas in a store owned by an Irishman. The storeowner convinced the Italian that the banana was to be eaten whole, including the skin. The Italian, not wanting to offend the Irishman, accepted the banana and ate it as instructed. He relayed this story of kindness by the Irishman to his friends, who promptly told him that he had been tricked. The Italian decided not to let this trick go unanswered, so the next time he saw the Irishman he introduced him to a figgatino, a prickly fruit that needs to be peeled before eating. The Irishman was convinced by the Italian that when swallowed whole, the figgatino will produce a taste unlike any other. Following the directions of the Italian, the Irishman almost choked to death and had to rush to the doctor to have the prickly stems removed from his throat and mouth.<sup>28</sup>

The story of Mr. Cuneo's grandfather is just one of hundreds of Italians settlers who helped establish the Italian colony in South Philadelphia. The Italians continued the trend of "recycling" neighborhoods between various different ethnic groups. (See Figure 1-B) South Philadelphia was not considered a particularly desirable portion of town for the wealthier "native" Philadelphians and they happily left it to the immigrants who populated the city.<sup>29</sup> The streets of South Philadelphia, such as Ninth Street, are extremely narrow and the rowhouses were tightly constructed along the blocks to maximize the space.<sup>30</sup> From the Irishmen, Germans, Russians, Jews and Italians to the present mixed population of today, the neighborhood is very dense and continues that feeling of being a

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<sup>27</sup>A. Fanelli. Interview with Mr. Frank Cuneo, April 18, 1940. Please Note: The Italian businesses were not located at Ninth Street as of this year.

<sup>28</sup>Palazzi. Interview with Alfio Casella. July 24, 1940.

<sup>29</sup>This portion of the city has always been the site of concentrated manufacturing and workers' homes.

<sup>30</sup>The Environmental Research Group, pg. 109-110.





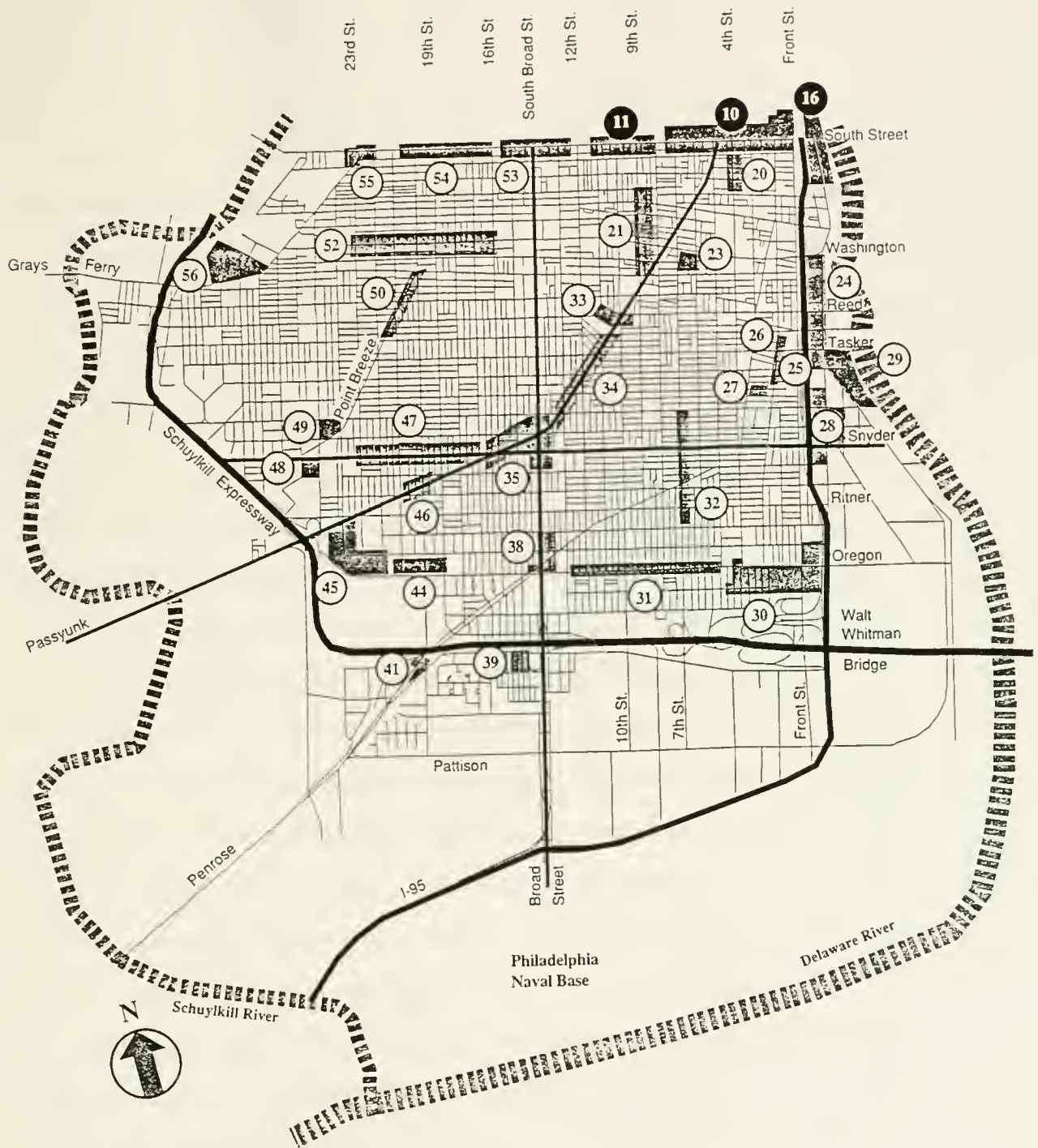


Figure 1-B: Map of Italian Market Boundaries (1998), 21



city within a city. South Philadelphia was considered the ghetto of Philadelphia in the late portion of the 19th and first half of the 20th Century.<sup>31</sup> The factories, boat yards and other manufacturing sites served as the employers for the residents, but the Italian Market eventually became the location for them to shop.

Mr. Frank Travascio, an undertaker who was located at Tenth and Christian, had come to Philadelphia in 1884. At the time of his arrival, the center of Italian colony boundaries were generally from Bainbridge St. to Washington and between Seventh and Eighth Street.<sup>32</sup> By 1900, according to Anthony Andreye who was a salesman from 705 Catherine Street, pushcarts began to appear along Ninth Street between Christian and Carpenter Street. The Italian grocery stores were located along Eighth and Seventh Streets, between Christian and Carpenter. The pushcarts' introduction to the neighborhood at this time was the beginning of the transformation of the Ninth Street corridor. According to Mr. Andreye, Ninth Street was purely residential, with no stores on the sidewalk. The families would sit on the stoop, watching the vendors hawk their wares and drown out the residents' conversations. Apparently there was a great deal of hostility between the families and the vendors, with fights occurring with increasing frequency. The police would eventually be called in to chase away the vendors, but as soon as the police left they would return. A number of people, Mr. Andreye included, regarded the vendors as "gypsies who would sell an eye for a dollar." Vendors were typically Sicilians and many Southern Italians felt they were cold hearted cheats.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Sam Bass Warner Jr., The Private City, (Philadelphia: 1968) p. 183.

<sup>32</sup>A. Fanelli, Interview with Frank Travascio, May 15, 1940.

<sup>33</sup>The attitude toward the Sicilians and their pushcarts appear to be split. The personal interviews I have been referring to agree with the above statement of the distrust for the Sicilians. Joan Younger Dickinson's Aspect of Italian immigration to Philadelphia, claims that Philadelphia's Italians welcomed the Sicilian peddler, (pg. 454) Being that the interviews are primary sources, I have to give them more weight on this issue.



Despite such attitudes, the vendors' territory began to expand toward Washington Avenue in 1916 where they were joined by Jewish clothes vendors. After World War I, the vendors market apparently stretched to Wharton Street and by 1940 had begun to take on the characteristics of what is now known as the Italian Market. Mr. Andreye recalled how Saturdays would bring throngs of people, especially Italians from other parts of the city, to the market and the new stores that began to establish themselves off of Ninth Street. It soon became the center of Italian commercial activity in the city.<sup>34</sup>

Mr. Frank Mammarella, a grocer at 804 S. 8th Street, corroborated Mr. Andreye's description of the course of events in the Italian Market. The concentration of Italian shopping had originally been along Eighth Street from Fitzwater to Christian Street. Mr. Mammarella goes on to reveal that the large Italian grocery stores were located along Eighth Street and a number of them eventually became wholesale houses. Popular stores included Cuneo's on Eighth and Christian and Kurtz's off of Eighth and Fitzwater Street. The Italian residents also shopped along Bainbridge Street between Third and Fifth Street, where mostly meat was sold and where there were storekeepers of mixed nationalities. The Dock Street Market, at the base of the Merchants' Exchange building at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Walnut Streets, had also attracted most Italians for the produce shopping, but there were a few vendors scattered along Ninth Street. Mr. Mammarella concluded that by the 1940's, the core of the Italian Market had firmly established itself along Ninth Street. It was at that point that he noticed a considerable decrease in his Eighth Street business.

In 1902, Mr. Michaelangelo Calvello arrived from the province of Basilicate and observed that the boundaries of the Italian colony stood between Sixth Street and Ninth

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<sup>34</sup>Palazzi, Interview with Anthony Andreye, July 30, 1940.



Street, from Bainbridge to Washington Avenue.<sup>35</sup> Mr. Casella, whose insight on village life in Italy was discussed before, arrived in Philadelphia in 1906. At this time, the Italians were located primarily around Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Streets, between Catherine and Washington Avenue. He stated that Ninth Street from Christian Street, where the Market now exists, used to be lined with trees and was very quiet. Mr. Casella stated that the Irish occupied much of this area still, but that they were beginning to feel the pressure of Italian encroachment. (Figure 1-C).

This account by Mr. Casella is supported by census data from 1900 and 1910. The year of 1900 revealed a large mixing along Ninth Street of Irish, Russians, Italians and many second-generation Irish-Americans. By 1910, a large shift from a heavy Irish influence to Italian dominance is revealed.<sup>36</sup> In 1907, Ninth Street began to appeal to the merchants of the area because it was now the center of the fast-expanding Italian population which had moved from its edge off of Fifth Street.<sup>37</sup> The last interviewee that contributed to the description of South Philadelphia's Little Italy and the Italian Market in its early days is Mr. Villoti. He arrived in Philadelphia in 1910 from the region of Abruzzi and was a baker from 615 Fitzwater Street. According to his observations, the Italian colony was bounded from the north by Bainbridge Street, east and west by Sixth and Eleventh Street and the South by Washington Avenue.<sup>38</sup>

The settlement of these various immigrants followed a rather predictable pattern. The immigrants needed to find shelter, food and a job to enable themselves to prosper and establish themselves in America. There were a number of immigrants who planned

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<sup>35</sup> A. Fanelli, Interview with Mr. Michaelangelo Calvello, May 21, 1940.

<sup>36</sup> U.S. Census Data, 1900-1910. Please Note: The author went through the blocks along Ninth Street and observed the shift of the nationality of the residents. An exact number was not tallied, but the shift was obvious.

<sup>37</sup> Palazzi, Interview with Mr. Alfio Casella, July 24, 1940.

<sup>38</sup> A. Fanelli, Interview with Mr. L. Villoti, June 5, 1940.





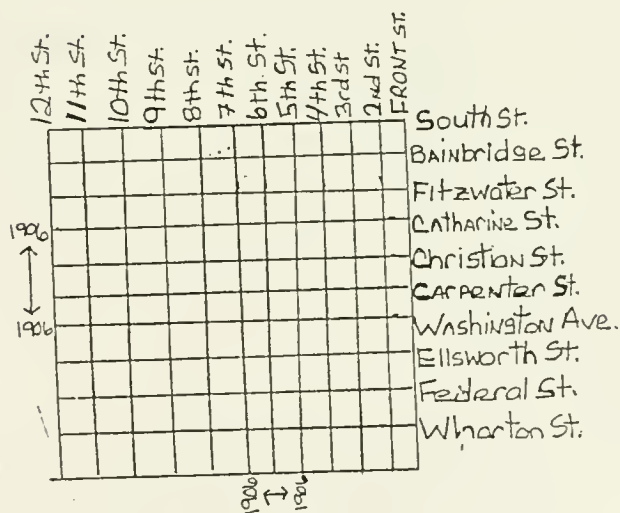
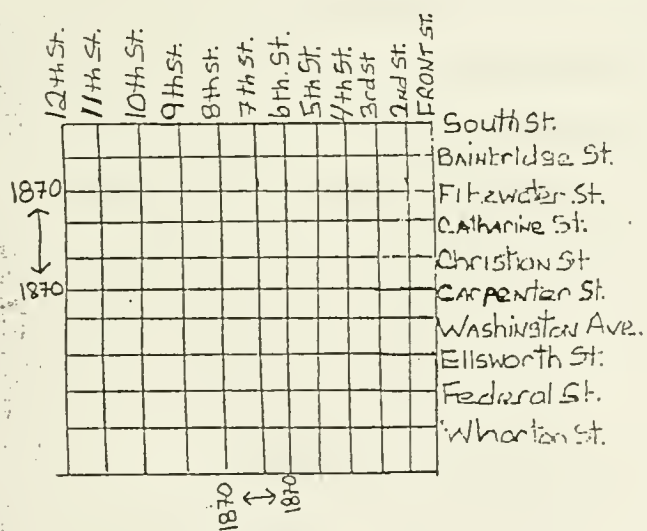
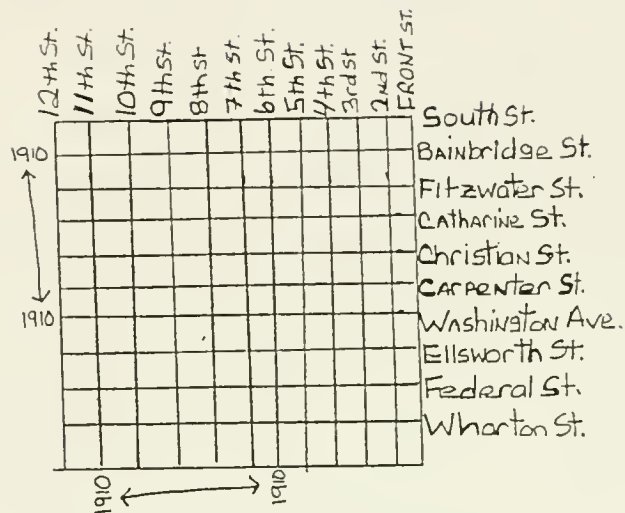
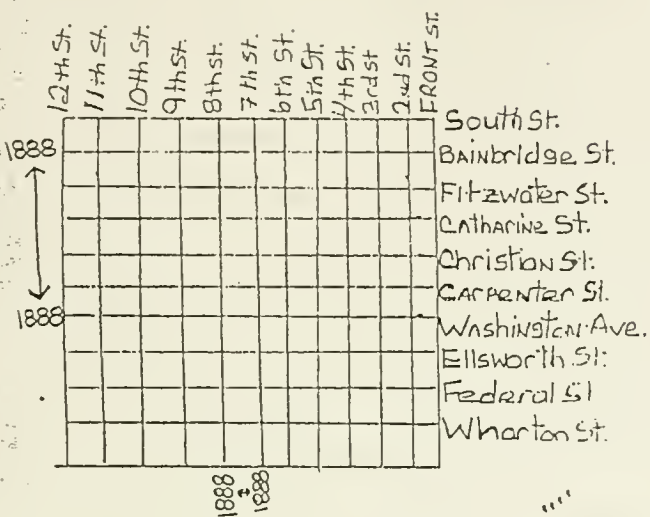


Figure 1-C: Italian Colony and Market "Boundaries" according to Immigrants



not to settle permanently in the United States, but instead to work for a period of time and return to Italy with money to improve their arrangements at home. These immigrants were usually single men who were boarders in the homes of immigrant families. According to the 1900 U.S. Census, Mr. and Mrs. Palumbo, natives of Italy, resided at 756 S. Ninth Street. In their house, they boarded thirteen Italian men: Angelo, Nichalo, Nicholas, John, Felio, Camillo and Paolo, all tailors; Frank, a blacksmith; Michael, a cabinet-maker; Anthony and Cardina, dealers; and Sebastian and Joseph, day laborers.<sup>39</sup> This residence is just one of a number of examples where unrelated boarders were the majority in a household. A large number of immigrants did have plans to settle themselves and their families in this country, which made them often turn to neighborhoods where their countrymen had already established themselves. Being near people of their own kind to help them adjust to America and find a job was extremely appealing and comforting.<sup>40</sup> It is important to understand that the Little Italy of South Philadelphia was never entirely Italian, just as it had never been entirely Irish in the decades before. The Italians shared the area with other ethnic groups such as the Russians and Germans. Their apparent dominance cannot be questioned, but they were never alone in the area around the Italian Market.<sup>41</sup>

The ethnic enclave, although it had its problems of overcrowding and unsanitary conditions, played a vital role within the city for the continuous influx of immigrants. As the members of each ethnic group arrived in America, they needed to adjust to the customs of the new society they were expected to interact with on a daily basis. The ethnic neighborhood allowed the immigrants to slowly assimilate themselves with the

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<sup>39</sup>U.S. Census Data, 1900 - Roll 1453.

<sup>40</sup>Joseph Lopreato, *Italian Americans*, (Austin: 1970), p. 40.

<sup>41</sup>U.S. Census Data, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920.



“native” Americans and, if they desired, shield themselves entirely from the city beyond the boundaries of their enclave. Eventually, the residents had to decide if they were to remain enclosed from the city by striving to keep their close-knit neighborhood closed to the outsiders or if they needed to move beyond an immigrant experience and integrate themselves within the larger society. It is nearly impossible for a neighborhood to remain unaffected by the city around them, especially as the ethnic group moves generations beyond arriving “straight off the boat”.

“The immigrant colony in America is a bridge of transition from the old world into the new; a half-way house on the road of assimilation.”<sup>42</sup> The neighborhood which is enclosed is functional for the new immigrant but restricting for the established residents. One of the functions that had allowed a number of immigrants to prosper was the availability of loans by money lenders in the neighborhood. They were not established banks of the Philadelphia financial world, but they took risks on the immigrants and the businesses they wanted to establish. These businesses allowed the neighborhood to function internally, but eventually they expanded their customer base.<sup>43</sup>

The Italian Market is a perfect example of an immigrant community, in this case, the Italian-American, opening their neighborhood to the city around it. Subsequent generations began to disperse themselves out by moving to other parts of the city and Southern New Jersey. But the emotional tie back to the old neighborhood remained for many and entailed trips back to visit friends and family.

The neighborhood’s old Italian-Americans have begun to die off with no

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<sup>42</sup>Everett V. Stonequist, The Marginal Man (New York: 1937) p. 85.

<sup>43</sup>Lopreato, pg. 45.



substantial influx of new Italians immigrating to the area. Other ethnic groups and African-Americans are the source of the new population for the neighborhood and it is evident by observing the customers of the Market and the employees as well. The stories of the people who immigrated to this area are one facet of a larger epic of the Italian-American experience in South Philadelphia and the Italian Market. By understanding how the experiences of life in Italy influenced the settlement patterns in Philadelphia, the story of the Italian Market and its importance to the community becomes clearer. It is at this point that the understanding of the transformation of the buildings and the physical nature of the neighborhood can be interpreted.





## Chapter 2:

### The Italian Market in the Later Years

The neighborhood in South Philadelphia was a stronghold of Italian-Americans throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The continuing influx of new immigrants helped to retain an Italian-American dominance that has eventually weakened over the twentieth century. Assimilation of Italians into the American culture and the integration of successive generations with other ethnic or racial groups helped in dispersing the Italian-Americans throughout not just South Philadelphia, but the country as well.

The Italian Market neighborhood and the other Italian-American enclaves across Philadelphia are no exceptions to this broad pattern of assimilation and dispersal. After World War II, the influx of Italian immigrants to the United States decreased considerably from its peak in the early decades of this century. Between the 1980 and 1990 U.S. Census, Philadelphia's Italian immigrants decreased from 17,262 to 9,279.<sup>41</sup> The reduced influx of new immigrants has been unable to replace the dying older generation and the younger generation that is steadily leaving from the neighborhood. African-Americans continue to gain prominence in the area, as well as an increasing Hispanic and Asian population.

The most recent group of individuals to move into the area, who have been a worry to some older residents is the middle and upper class home buyers. According to Richard Juliani, gentrification has begun to creep into the area around the market with the

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<sup>41</sup>Richard Juliani, "Community and Identity: Continuity and Change among Italian Americans in Philadelphia," pg 5



property taxes increasing as the price of the property itself does. While attending a forum at the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies on the Italian-American community in Philadelphia, a number of the older audience members began to complain about changes in the neighborhood. One resident stated that the young “yuppies” were ruining the community. She related a story in which one of her neighbors had decided to leave the area for Southern New Jersey in the early 1990’s. This past year that same couple decided to move back to the area and purchase a home on the same block as their previous residence. The house they bought had tripled in price. The audience member had stated that if the “yuppies” left the neighborhood, or never moved in, the price of real estate would not have become so extravagant and the taxes wouldn’t be so high.<sup>45</sup> The Italian Market area does have an interesting appeal because of its modest rowhouses within a close walking distance to shops on both the Ninth Street corridor and Passyunk Avenue. Although there has been an influx of younger people into the area, it shouldn’t be considered a destructive force for the neighborhood. The influx of “new” blood will help to ensure a continual customer base for the Market’s business from around the neighborhood.

The diminishing numbers of the Italian-Americans in the Italian Market is alarming for many, but the natural transformation of an area’s population has always been associated with an immigrant neighborhood. Although the Italian-Americans have endured and dominated longer than any other previous ethnic group, the eventual moving on is inevitable. The Italian Market has adjusted as the neighborhood changes around its borders. The buildings on these blocks are a testament to all that they have witnessed

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<sup>45</sup>This forum in January of 1998, is where Richard Juliani presented his paper, “Community and Identity: Continuity and Change Among Italian Americans in Philadelphia.” The discussion after the presentation were quite lively, with a number of residents expressing their opinions about the changes which are occurring in the Italian Market neighborhood.



from the days of the Irish dominance to the influx of the Asians today. Even as the ethnic make-up of the area around the Market changes, the Italian-Americans have been able to maintain a certain degree of “power.” They will continue to be influential and involved with the Market as long as the old families continue to run their stores and teach their children the way of the business. The preservationists’ job is to interpret the character of the Market by understanding where the establishing families came from and how the buildings were transformed to serve the merchants and the customers.

The Italian Market remains a commercial core for the South Philadelphia neighborhood and the shops retain an Italian-American flavor (See Figure 2-A). A few of the older families own a number of properties along Ninth Street and lease them to other merchants or family members. For example, Giordano’s, at the corner of Ninth and Washington, owns not just its property, but two of the other corners of Washington



Figure 2-A: Giordano's - Washington Avenue and Ninth Street, 1954 (Courtesy of Free Library of Philadelphia)



Avenue as well. The family leases one property to a relative and another to an Asian merchant.<sup>46</sup> This example of an Italian family keeping themselves invested in the community is a positive sign of continued commitment. The influx of other businesses is becoming more obvious as time moves on and the merchants have begun to prepare themselves for the new millennium. The buildings along Ninth Street are one of their most important business assets, since many merchants have been in the same location for over fifty years. But as the years have progressed, the need for the upper floors as apartments has decreased and their vacancy attributed to a rapid deterioration, which has gone unchecked. A number of the families no longer need to live above their stores and the practice of renting out space to boarders has passed as well. The design of the buildings makes it difficult to rent out the upper floors as apartments. The merchants are



Figure 2-B: Upper Floors of Ninth Street Building, 1998

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<sup>46</sup>Bob Keppel (Cope-Linder Associates). Interview with Author, April 1, 1998.





no longer able to ignore the basic maintenance on their properties because the situation has worsened and many merchants feel that it has begun to have a negative effect on business.<sup>47</sup> Instead of ignoring the upper floors, some merchants have transformed them and changed the integrity of the building (Figure 2-B).

The Cope-Linder Refurbishment Plan, implementation of which is to begin in late 1998, has looked only cursorily into the condition of the buildings along the Ninth Street corridor. The Plans will be addressed in the next chapter, while this chapter will look at the Market's existing condition. My observations are based on a building to building survey conducted during the fall/winter of 1997 and spring 1998 from the streets, as well as on conversations with random individuals at the Market. My study covered the Ninth Street corridor from Fitzwater Street to Federal Street. I looked at several aspects of the buildings' facades, such as the building material, its condition, the apparent uses of the upper floors, the inclusion of a canopy and any other pertinent information. The completed survey is located in the Appendix, but I will interpret my findings in this chapter.

The fringes of the Italian Market are located primarily along Ninth Street north of Christian Street, where a majority of the buildings retain their use as residential properties. A few commercial properties can be found, such as Sarcone's Deli on the corner of Ninth and Fitzwater and Sarcone's Bakery at 756 & 758 S. Ninth Street. The deli is a new addition to the area while the bakery has been in the Market since 1918. On the street between Fitzwater and Catherine, a majority of the properties have retained their brick facades. A number of the properties, such as 750 S. Ninth Street, have a faux facade. In this case the material is "stone" and is projecting a bit further out from its

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<sup>47</sup>Sean Mills. Interview of Merchants. Summer, 1995.



neighbor.

Indeed, a sizable percentage of the properties along the Market, especially the residential ones, have undergone significant changes to their facades. The materials range from a faux facade of stone, to vinyl siding and new applied brick in a multitude of colors (Figure 2-C). The buildings with the vinyl siding often times have covered their decorative cornice with that material as well. Ralph's Italian Restaurant, located at 760 S. Ninth Street, had added a veranda to the second floor with a glass addition off of the first floor. The changes that these buildings have undergone on this block, though disturbing to a preservationist, are nevertheless evidence of a vested interest by the owner in their property. A majority of the properties are three story rowhouses with some of the original stoops still attached (762 S. Ninth Street).

Figure 2-C: Example of façade with multiple materials - 742 S. Ninth Street





Along Ninth, between Catherine and Christian, the shift away from strict residential properties continues. Along the east side of Ninth Street, a Rite Aid Pharmacy rests on the site of the former Palumbo's restaurant. Palumbo's, before it was a restaurant, was once a prime boarding house for newly arriving immigrants. All that remains on the property is a historical marker which briefly explains the history of Palumbo's. It was destroyed by two devastating fires in 1994.<sup>48</sup> The west side of the street has a number of mixed use buildings, but vacant store fronts plague about six buildings. Of the four stores which are located on the block, two are Asian (Khmer-Angkor Jewelry and Dan Khang Nha Trang, Inc.), one is a record store and the other is an antique store. It appears that a majority of the buildings' upper floors are used as apartments, which is different from the other sections of the Market.



Figure 2-D: Commercial Building at Catherine and Ninth Street

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<sup>48</sup>Richard Juliani, *Community and Identity: Continuity and Change among Italian Americans in Philadelphia*, pg. 7.



Once one crosses over Christian Street going south, the commercial aspect of the Market dominates the building fabric (Figure 2-E). The west side of the street only contains four businesses when it is intersected by a side street named Salter. Lorenzo's Pizza and George's Famous Sandwiches, which occupy the corner building off of Ninth and Christian, is a brick row with its decorative cornice still intact. Unfortunately, the windows in the building and in the projecting bay are sealed. This building is just one example of numerous occasions of the upper floors being unused. A number of merchants use these upper floors for storage, but it has been decades since there have been permanent residents in those buildings. Since the buildings were originally designed for residential use, there are no exterior entrances to the upper floors. It is very difficult to rent out the upper floors unless the owner builds an exterior entrance or allows them to go through the store. The next store is the Flower Basket, the first floor shop facade of which was recently redone. The store window is extremely large and the material used is aluminum siding. This treatment of the first floor has been repeated in other businesses along the Market, but rarely is anything corresponding on the upper floors. In this instance, a brick facade remains with the cornice covered with the aluminum. The Spice Corner, on the corner of Ninth and Salter Street, also has its upper floor sealed. The projecting bays, as well as the building, are in need of repair.

The majority of the buildings need some work, while other buildings need complete rehabilitation. A large number of the merchants have allowed their buildings to deteriorate for so long that a large amount of money would need to be invested for both





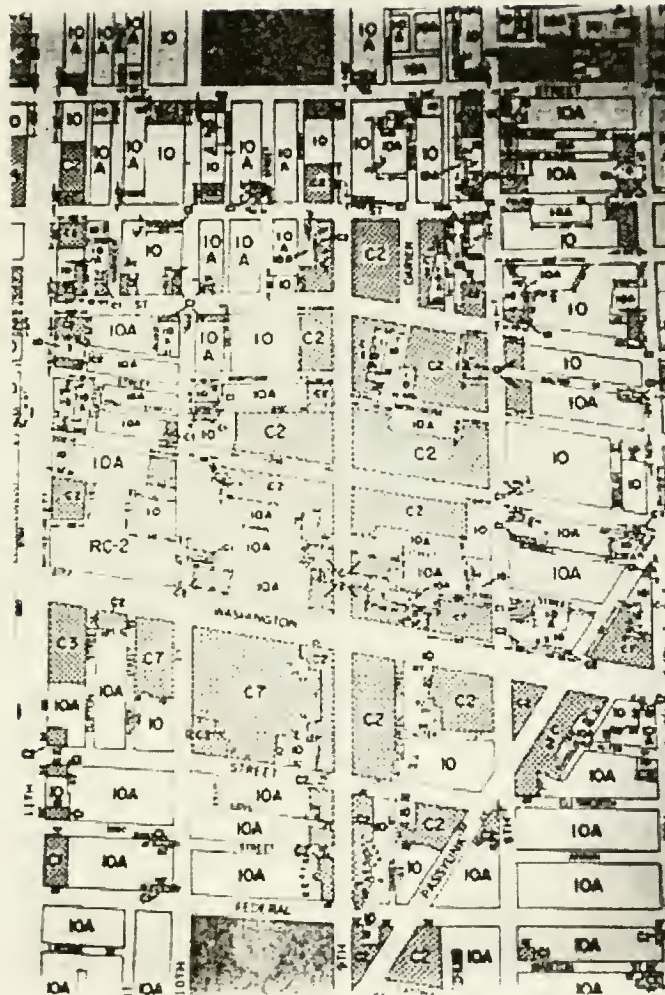


Figure 2-E: Zoning Designation for Italian market

facade repairs or substantial rehabilitation. Other merchants care for the store level floor only, leaving the upper floors to the pigeons and the elements.





Figure 2-F: Pigeons' home on the Italian Market

Since a portion of the buildings have left the upper floors vacant and unused, this might be an opportunity for extensive study of the mortar, paint, and interior architectural features. At Renzulli's Italian Water Ice & Funnel cakes, 922 S. Ninth Street, the simple row still has the fire insurance symbol between the windows. The Villa de Roma at 932-936 S. Ninth Street, is an interesting example of "Italian-ness" in its most peculiar form (Figure 2-H). The red, white and green colored facade is similar to another building in Little Italy, New York. The Villa de Roma's structure is only one floor with a glass enclosure extending onto the sidewalk. It is an interesting site in the Italian Market because it is the only building with such coloring and style. The new facades applied to a



number of buildings have “cleaned” up the image of some properties, but it has entirely changed the character of the structures. The building which stands out in comparison to its neighbors is Talluto’s Authentic Italian Food at the corner of Ninth and Carpenter. The upper floors of the structure appear to be stucco which has been scored to simulate stone.



Figure 2-G:Talluto’s and the Villa de Roma off of Ninth and Carpenter Street

A gentleman revealed that it had been done within the last couple of years and has helped to really “shape up” the building. These various anomalies lead one to ask that although a number of the changes to these buildings are not aesthetically pleasing or historically accurate, should they be excluded from protection and study? As a preservationist, I would say no because their overall importance to the community of Philadelphia and the





history of immigrant neighborhoods is crucial. Although changes have been made, most of the original facades can be seen behind the applied facade such as 1016 S. Ninth Street. The original brick can be seen through the deteriorating stucco on the upper floors (Figure 2-H).

A few of the buildings are in very good condition with relatively little damage done to the facades of the upper floors. C & S Discount Store, at 1000-1004 S. Ninth Street, (Figure 2-I) is an excellent example of a building whose features have survived in good condition. The building is quite large facing both Ninth Street and Carpenter Street.



Figure 2-H: 1016 S. Ninth Street



Figure 2-I: C & S Discount

The projecting bays appear to have been recently painted and although the upper floors





are not being used as apartments, the windows are intact. The decorative cornice is still in place and has been painted to match the color scheme of the projecting bays.

Giordano's, located on the corner of Washington Avenue and Ninth Street, has been an anchor for the Italian Market since the first half of this century. The three story brick buildings that the store occupies faces both Washington Avenue and the main corridor of the Market. The upper floors of the corner building and cornice have remained intact with the projecting bay facing Washington. The first floor is opened to the sidewalk with only the load-bearing sections remaining in the front of the store. The second storefront in the brick rowhouse facing Ninth Street still has the Fire Insurance symbol between the third floor windows. The Giordano family is very influential in the Market since they own a few properties and the members operate a number of establishments.<sup>49</sup>



Figure 2-J: Giordano's, 1974 (Courtesy of Temple University Urban Archives, Philadelphia, PA)

<sup>49</sup> Bob Keppel. Interview By Author, April 1, 1998.



The pre-commercial integrity of some of the buildings has been severely compromised with the opening of the first floors onto the sidewalk. Giordano's, along with Guy Giordano & Sons (1037 Ninth Street), 1029 S. Ninth Street, and 1027 S. Ninth Street, are just a few examples of this happening. The area no longer has a door and display window, but instead has no front wall other than the merchandise they pile along the sidewalk. Although the remnants of the first floor facades have not survived, the commercial integrity has not been destroyed. These buildings have operated as stores since the early years of this century. The key to understanding the Market's past is to acknowledge how the commercial activity shaped the buildings and how the buildings shaped their businesses. Instead of removing and gutting the entire first floor, a number of merchants had introduced the shop windows with a new entrance (Figure 2-K and 2-L) and the removal of the stoop to maximize space for the merchandise (Figure 2-G).



Figure 2-L: Fante's - 1006-1008 S. Ninth Street



Figure 2-M: Insertion of Display Window



The removing of the first floor is one example of the merchant changing the building to fit the needs of his customers and himself. The vendors merchandise would line the edge of the sidewalk and the street, which would leave the store merchant a couple of feet in front of his store (Figure 2-N). The changes made to the buildings reflected the requirement of the merchants and their display needs for their merchandise.



Figure 2-N: Ninth Street, July 1947 (Courtesy of Temple University Urban Archives, Philadelphia, PA)

Continuing south along Ninth Street, once a customer crosses over Washington Avenue, the Market appears to end and the building scheme changes as well. Although the Italian Market continues, Washington Avenue is both a physical and psychological barrier. The east side of the street contrasts significantly in comparison to the rest of the Market. The corner property is the site of Anastasi Seafood and owned by Giordano's (NE corner). The brick building is only one story, with a majority of it constructed with







Figure 2-N: The Meridan Ice & Coal Company in June, 1951. (Courtesy of Temple University Urban Archives, Philadelphia, PA)

large store front windows opening up onto the sidewalk. The block is also the site of the old Meridan Ice & Coal Company whose building occupies about half the block between Washington and Ellsworth Street (Figure 2-N & 2-O).

The building is dominant in this area of the Market and the ground level is occupied with a multitude of shops and vendors. The two-story brick building retains portions of the original painted sign on the facade and the building has been relatively unchanged above the stores. The canopies are supported by steel rods attached to the walls and it is unclear if the facade wall is structurally capable of carrying the weight.<sup>50</sup> It would be a shame to potentially lose that building to an oversight of such a dangerous arrangement.

<sup>50</sup>In my conversation of Bob Keppel from Cope-Linder Associates, he had expressed concern about the canopy's anchor system. He stated that as far as he knew, there had been no engineering evaluation of the strength of that wall and its capacity to sustain the weight if snow and ice collected on the canopy. It would be essential to have a study conducted to insure the integrity of the wall and the building. It is an integral portion of the Market's "skyline".







Figure 2-O: Same Building in Spring, 1998.

The building is sealed and sits next to another commercial building, which casts a long shadow across the street. The former engine house for the ice factory is a two story, brick building with its windows boarded up and sealed (Figure 2-P). The vents are still intact and the ground floor was once occupied by The Bottom Line, which is no longer open for business. These two buildings are an important aspect of the story because they are examples of the employment opportunities for a large number of the immigrants who occupied the Italian Market community. The Market was also surrounded by other companies such as the Curtis Publishing Company and the American Cigar Company on Eleventh Street. The Caleb J. Milne & Sons' Mill off Tenth Street contained a shoe factory and facilities for weaving, spooling and finishing cotton goods. Washington Avenue, between Eleventh and Twelfth, was the site of McCracken & Hall's Fancy Cabinet ware factory. These examples were employers for some of the residents along the



Italian Market and surrounding community.<sup>51</sup>



Figure 2-P: Ice House Engine Building on east side of south Ninth Street. 1998

The west side of Ninth Street, south of Washington Avenue, has been relatively abandoned and it gives one an uneasy feeling walking along the empty storefronts.<sup>52</sup> These buildings are one story and have not been used as residences. A majority of the store windows are sealed and painted over with the doors closed and darkened. There are signs of the former stores still hanging from the canopies, such as A & R's Printed T-shirts. There is another shift as the end of the block opens up and four rowhouses rise above the one story derelict building one had been walking along. 1136 S. Ninth Street has been sealed along the first floor with the upper floors relatively burnt out. The main

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<sup>51</sup> See Appendix Photographs : #A-4 - A-10.

<sup>52</sup>Please Note: This is the feeling of the author and is not necessarily felt by everyone in the Market. This side of the street is very desolate and dark.



fabric of the facade has remained intact, but extensive rehabilitation is needed inside. 1138 S. Ninth Street has undergone some extensive work on the exterior and interior. A young woman working outside of the building had revealed that the building's facade had recently been repaired and painted. The apartments on the upper floors had been worked on as well, with her antique store on the first floor. The building is a welcome contrast in comparison to its neighbors farther north along Ninth Street. It reflects the potential of the Market, if and when once again the buildings have been restored and properly cared for.



Figure 2-Q: Ninth Street and Corner of Ellsworth Street

South of Washington exhibits more problems than the portions of the Market North of Washington Avenue. The building deterioration continues south of Ellsworth



Street with a number of vacant stores and abandoned upper floors. The South Philadelphia Gun Shop, located at 1144 S. Ninth Street, is a three-story, yellow brick structure. The glass of the windows in the upper floors is gone and the window frames are falling apart. The windows are sealed from the inside with metal and there is a large crack that runs across the brick work of the third floor. As one moves farther south along that block, Caesar's Fruit Basket is located at 1148 S. Ninth Street. This rowhouse is three stories high with the decorative cornice and the stone stoop still intact. The store window is small and brick still rests below the window. The building is in very good condition in comparison with the rest of the block farther north.



Figure 2-R: The Push Cart Saloon, 1154 S. Ninth Street

There are two structures between Ernest Street and Annin Street on the west side





of Ninth Street which have been left to rot by their owners. There had been a fire which essentially gutted the Push Cart Saloon (Figure 2-R) on the southern corner and the structure to its immediate right. There is no glass remaining in the windows and there is no roof on the Saloon. The cornice and bays appear to be in imminent danger of collapse. These buildings are a derelict eyesore for this portion of the Market and give customers an extremely negative image. A large amount of money would need to be invested, even assuming the buildings were still structurally sound. This type of continued abandonment can only negatively influence the fringes of the Market and diminish its integrity in the community.

The east side of Ninth Street between Federal and Ellsworth Street is an example of the varying types of facades found throughout the Market. J & J South Philly Pizza, at the corner of Federal and Ninth Street, is in very good condition with its cornice intact. The building next door has its brick facade in good condition, but the projecting bay and cornice need a paint job. As one continues down the block, the facades range from being yellow brick, aluminum siding, faux stone to stucco (Figure 2-S). The variations in material would make an overall rehabilitation and restoration of the Market expensive and time consuming.<sup>53</sup> Unfortunately, the need to make sure that all the property owners maintain the properties at the most basic level is necessary if any sweeping restoration is to be attempted at a later date. The merchants are aware of the negative image some customers perceive as they walk through the Market. But this awareness has not influenced a large number of them to properly care for their buildings.<sup>54</sup> The unified support has been lacking in the past and will be detrimental to any long-term plan for

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<sup>53</sup>Bob Keppel, interview with author, April 1, 1998. Author's Note: The assumption would be if it was decided that the buildings should return to their original brick facades.

<sup>54</sup> The merchants revealed their understanding of the negative image issue through the interview conducted by Sean Mills.



Ninth Street.



Figure 2-S: An example of the variety of façade materials along the Italian Market

There are only a few establishments that continue the Market's tradition of offering customers the  *freshest*  meats. 1164 S. Ninth Street is the current location of a small slaughterhouse. The animals are caged on the streets and within the first floor (Figure 2-T). The entire first floor has been gutted with the interior now being the area where the animals are killed and prepared for the customer. The upper floors have a



yellow brick facade with a decorative cap and an added veranda. It is unclear if the upper floors are used as apartments or for business purposes.

These type of establishments are just one of the pieces which give the Italian Market its ability to continue as a neighborhood market. Instead of trendy coffee shops, souvenir shops and high end clothing stores, the shops help prolong the sense of the Market's special character and reflects the needs of the community and the specialized items that can be found in only a few sections of the city. These characteristics allow the Market to be unique and invaluable to the Philadelphia community.



Figure 2-T: Animals awaiting their inevitable doom. the dinner table.



**Chapter 3:**  
**Plans from the Past**  
**and a Plan for the Future**

The merchants of the Italian Market have had a number of problems that other business locations have not had to address. The Italian Market is located within blocks of mid-nineteenth century streets and inside mid-nineteenth century homes. The streets are extremely narrow and the rowhouses are tightly packed in along Ninth Street. Vendors line one side of the street, with a portion of the merchandise and garbage streaming onto the street. A bus line runs along Ninth Street and trucks attempt to make deliveries at numerous times of the day. Regular car traffic moves along Ninth Street as well and the consumers can be seen zigzagging in and out of traffic. The scene could be described by some as a nightmare and by others as a fine example of urban life at its busiest. Unfortunately, the set-up is rather dangerous for the consumer and the vendors. This could be seen in a tragic accident in April 1995, when a truck struck and killed a young vendor during the mid-afternoon shopping peak at a main section of the Market.<sup>55</sup> The need for organization and changes in the Market has been recognized since the days of the clean-up of the pushcarts in the 1950's.

The Cope-Linder Refurbishment Plan is not the Italian Market merchants' first attempt to address some of the problems they faced. In 1978, a technical study was prepared for the Office of Housing and Community Development by David Beck, AIA and Richard Saul Wurman, Deputy Director. The Businessmen's Association requested

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<sup>55</sup>Ralph Cipriano, "In the Italian Market, 'Best Kid' is Mourned," Philadelphia Inquirer, April 12, 1995.





this study (as they did the one done recently that they are now planning to put into effect). The plans from 1978 address trash collection, traffic conflicts, parking, signage and the question of the awnings/canopies. A majority of the data had been given by the merchants as is the case in the current Refurbishment plan. The plan in 1978 reflected the long standing problems facing the merchants, and it is interesting that not until twenty years later has anything truly being done to alleviate part of the situation. The future of a comprehensive, long-term preservation plan would depend on addressing these issues along with restoration and other preservation initiatives.

One of the biggest problems acknowledged in the 1978 plan was the removal of the trash from the Italian Market. At this time, about fifty percent of the garbage produced was by the street vendors (See Figure A-1 in Appendix). The street vendors, since their space was rather limited, would toss their garbage across the street from their stand where their trucks would often be parked. Although the trash collector was available to pick-up the trash, the situation along Ninth Street made it extremely difficult for the trucks to get down the street quickly and pick up the garbage. Rarely was the trash in a neat pile, because it was blown or knocked over by passing cars or pedestrians. This meant that the garbage men needed to sweep up and shovel the strewn trash into the truck. This stopped traffic, eventually requiring the police to come along to ask the trucks to move to keep traffic flowing. It would then take another thirty minutes to reposition themselves back on Ninth Street and, in some instances, it would take more than four hours to move from Federal to Christian Street.<sup>56</sup>

The situation is practically identical today. If you walk along Ninth Street, the

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<sup>56</sup>Office of Housing and Community Development of the City of Philadelphia, The Italian Market: A Technical Study, (Philadelphia, 1978) p. 3.



vendors stack piles of cardboard boxes and rotted vegetables along the street. A majority of vendors now use dumpsters which has helped to get the garbage off the streets. Unfortunately, the dumpsters are just as unsightly as the trash in the streets.

The garbage trucks were just one vehicle which contributed to the horrendous traffic conditions found in the Italian Market in 1978. In addition, the merchandise was delivered for the Market primarily along Ninth Street. The vendors delivered their own merchandise in the morning to enable them time to set up their tables. The trucks were then parked across the street from their stands. Deliveries for the store merchants often times arrived throughout the day and they would park their trucks on the opposite side of the street as they unloaded their cargo. Some vendors had their merchandise delivered along the side streets, not Ninth Street, and placed in a rented warehouse space on that street to be retrieved as needed for his stands. According to the report, very few vendors had taken advantage of this system.

The 1978 report recognized that a majority of the vehicles parked along Ninth Street did not belong to customers, but rather were vendors' trucks or cars reserving space for the delivery trucks later in the day.<sup>57</sup> The transportation options for customers to reach the Market were considered adequate and were not particularly addressed at the time. They could take public transportation, walk or drive and park their cars a few blocks from Ninth Street. Today, this is essentially unchanged.

The 1978 planning team suggested a few scenarios to help alleviate the overcrowding and congestion along Ninth Street. In all their suggestions, parking along the west lane would have been prohibited. In their first scenario, the west lane would become the moving lane for the delivery trucks, SEPTA buses and customers' cars.

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<sup>57</sup>J.D. McCaffrey, 'Italian Market's Problem: Growth,' The Bulletin, July 16, 1978.



Towing was to be strictly enforced to enable the flow to move unrestricted. The middle lane would be restricted to garbage trucks only, with the vendors depositing their trash along the middle lane. The trucks would supposedly drive in reverse to allow its hopper in front to pick up the trash. This scenario would have been interesting to see in action. The logic in this suggestion was relatively lacking because having a large truck such as the garbage vehicles drive backward the entire stretch of the Italian Market seemed unwise.<sup>58</sup> The planners acknowledged that the success of such a scenario would ultimately depend on enforcement of keeping non-garbage trucks out of that specific lane. The other traffic limited to one lane was also problematic since deliveries would slow up the flow of the vehicles. The question of the convenience for the shopper was not truly addressed. This scenario was named the concept of Maximum Traffic Access.<sup>59</sup>

The second scenario was considered a more balanced solution. To alleviate the potential problem of traffic congestion, it was suggested that deliveries be made only before 10:00 a.m. on Ninth Street; after 10 o'clock they were to have been made along the east-west intersection streets, such as Washington Avenue. The SEPTA bus would share the single moving lane with the trash collectors after 10:00 a.m.. By eliminating cars entirely, the only traffic after 10:00 a.m. would be the SEPTA bus on its regular scheduled runs and the garbage trucks once every hour and a half. The trash would be deposited on the east side of the street, and the vendors would take up a former lane of

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<sup>58</sup> A garbage truck driver related his feelings on the potential feasibility of this plan. "Driving a truck backwards is not particularly difficult, but most drivers would prefer not doing it. The potential of something going wrong is just that much more inevitable. The driver would need at least one other individual behind the truck to assist him in backing up. The limited space and the significant congestion of other cars, customers and vendors swarming around the street would be an accident waiting to happen. In my particular situation, if a driver hits anything, regardless of what it is, a hundred dollars is deducted from their paycheck. I would not want to follow this suggestion and I think it is extremely short-sited by the planners." Interview conducted by author with Robert Joseph Gladd Jr., March 22, 1998. Mr. Gladd is a driver for the Town of Oyster Bay S.O.R.T. division.

<sup>59</sup> Office of Housing and Community Development of the City of Philadelphia, p.6-7.



traffic for use as storage of their inventory. The sidewalk would increase by fifteen feet for the convenience of the customers. In order for them to pick up merchandise though, they would have to go to loading zones at the intersections on the East-West streets.<sup>60</sup>

The merchants preferred the second scenario which allowed for the greatest movement of vehicles and the retaining of the SEPTA bus route along Ninth Street. The center lane of traffic would be used by the garbage truck after 10:00 a.m. and would allow the vendors to place their trash in that lane. The lane for the vendors would be reduced to a width of six feet and there would be the installation of bollards around the center lane to keep other traffic out. The west lane would be a no-stopping lane and customer pick-up would have been located on the East-West intersections.<sup>61</sup> The need to alleviate the traffic was essential to the 1978 plan and unfortunately the problems still exist today. There is no present plan to address the traffic problems and the merchants I spoke to in the Market just accept it as a part of the “ambiance” of the area. The need to seriously establish a traffic solution for the Market is essential to improve accessibility in the future.

The problem of signage was also a significant issue for the merchants in the 1978 plan. The supposed increase in customers (provided by improved visibility to tourists) who would drive their cars to the Market would need signs to lead them to the parking lots available for shopping. Another suggestion, in addition to the obvious signs needed for parking, was the introduction of Gateway signs. The signs would let the incoming customer know he or she was nearing the Italian Market at all of the main streets leading into the Ninth Street corridor. Their suggestion for the signs was the use of the Italian

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid, p.8-9.





flag colors (red, white and green) and Italian terms (Benvenuto). Parking Arrows and Parking Lot signs, Customer Pick-Up signs and Pedestrian Route maps.<sup>62</sup> The use of the Italian Flag and the American flag had been implemented during the late seventies and eighties, but little of that remains today.



Figure 3-A: 1000 Block of Ninth Street, September, 1975  
(Courtesy of Temple University Urban Archives, Philadelphia, PA)

The final aspect of the 1978 plan was the facelift of the canopies along the Italian Market. The canopy protected the vendors and the customers from the elements and allowed the market to be an outdoor shopping experience year-round. The canopies at this time were damaged in a number of sections and they hung so low that they were

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid. p. 17.



often slammed into by passing trucks. The canopies were either metal or dark tarpaulins which allowed very little light to filter through and illuminate the vendors and their wares. The recommendations for the canopies were apparently low in cost and would have enabled the individual merchants to make the repairs or replacements themselves. The canopy's front edge would be lifted to twelve feet and three inches above the pavement or replaced with a translucent, fiberglass sheeting. Extending from the canopy would then be the awning, designed with a clear plastic window to allow light into the vendor's domain.<sup>63</sup>

The planners were hoping that the main points of their proposal would be implemented in a 90-day trial to test the feasibility of the study. The thrust of the study was to develop a plan that would make a difference immediately, not a long-term development plan. Unfortunately, the plan never went into full effect and some of the issues that were addressed in 1978 remain the ones discussed by the merchants today. They were developed by Cope-Linder Associates into what is now known as the Refurbishment Plan that is supposed to be completed by the end of 1998. The plan, which is to be implemented this year, is not as sweeping as the 1978 plan. The issue of the canopies is the only one to be implemented, but it has a good chance of succeeding.

Cope Linder Associates was hired by the Italian Market Business Association, in conjunction with the City Planning Commission and the Philadelphia Commercial Development Corporation, to develop a Canopy Feasibility Study to look at this issue which was confronting a number of merchants. There was no wide spread replacement or repair of the canopies as was called for in the 1978 plan. The canopies have continued to deteriorate and as a result the image of the Italian Market has become "grungier" over the

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid, p.11-13.



years. As a part of their 1995 study, Cope-Linder Associates interviewed a number of merchants to find out their feelings about the functional operation of their store, lighting and a canopy/awning design. Sean Mills, a graduate student from Eastern College, also conducted a series of interviews and a pedestrian traffic study in the summer of 1995. The insight drawn from both of these studies is critical to understanding the thinking of the merchants before the work was begun on the Italian Market. Until the work is completed and the merchants have the opportunity to see how the changes affect their business, their sense of the situation would be nearly identical to the way it was in the summer and fall of 1995.<sup>64</sup>

Cope Linder Associates' survey revealed a number of different opinions about what the merchants' needed on an individual basis. It also revealed what they felt was necessary for the good of the Italian Market as a whole. The question of night security lights was commented upon by several merchants. They felt it would be a good addition to the market, especially for those individual merchants who don't leave the lights on in their store at night. The opaqueness of the canopies darkens the sidewalk considerably during the day. At night, a number of the vendors don't roll up their awnings and, instead, unhook them from their poles and let them lie against the support for the canopies. This, in essence, shrouds the sidewalk in almost complete blackness and gives people the sense of fear. Other merchants leave on a small light in the store for security, but the sense is that overall night lighting appears to be needed. Suggestions by the merchants also include proper lighting for their products, but some vendors with lights have had them broken or stolen by vandals. Cope Linder Associates have recommended a multi-purpose

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<sup>64</sup>The interviews conducted by both groups have revealed a similarity in answers and feelings toward the issue at hand. It will be imperative to re-interview the merchants after work is done. The survey conducted by Sean Mills was obtained from Linda Dotorr of the City Planning Commission. She also brought to my attention the study by Cope Linder Associates. The information and advice she provided was invaluable.



channelite, a fluorescent floodlight and a compact fluorescent lexan globe. The three choices are examples of efficient and reasonable priced options for the merchants. A number of merchants have already invested in this type of lighting, and it has made a marked difference.

The vendors and their trash have once again been brought up. As in the 1978 plan, the vendors' trash is a nuisance for the merchants (Figure 3-B). Dumpsters are now used by the vendors, but a recent trip along the Italian Market revealed a number of vendors still throwing their trash next to trucks across the street from their stand.



Figure 3-B: 1952 view of Ninth Street. Note the vendor trash taking up a lane of traffic  
(Courtesy of Temple University, Urban Archives, Philadelphia, PA)

The answer for some vendors is the burning of trash in the open fire barrels and according to one vendor it is part of the market's atmosphere. I have to agree with the





merchant that this does have a degree of “ambiance”, and it always reminds me of the scene in “Rocky” when Sylvester Stallone is running along the market. Another merchant complained though that the open fires make his products both smelly and dirty. The merchants, in some instances, wish to see the vendors gone altogether. They complain that since they don’t clean up their mess and take up too much parking, they are taking away business. Bob Keppel, an architect from Cope-Linder Associates, revealed that in his workings with the Italian Market he was a witness to the merchants’ overall dislike for the vendors.<sup>65</sup> It appears to be a long standing love-hate relationship. I am



Figure 3-C: Ninth Street and Kimball Street in 1952 (Courtesy of Temple University Urban Archives, Philadelphia, PA)

vehemently against the idea of removing the vendors because historically the vendors and their predecessors, the pushcart merchants, were members of the Ninth Street market corridor before the introduction of stores in the buildings. The vendors are what gives the

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<sup>65</sup>Bob Keppel, Interview by author, April 1, 1998.



Italian Market its feeling of a crowded market and a bustling urban neighborhood core. The vendors pay Licensees & Inspections permit fees to set up in the Italian Market. This fee gives them the right to have their business in the Market even though a number of the merchants resent them.

This has not been the first complaint about the vendors. For example, in the 1940 and 50's, there was a movement to remove the pushcarts from the Market because of traffic and fire hazards. The city succeeded in removing them for a few years, but they soon returned and have remained relatively unmolested by the city.<sup>66</sup> However, as suggested by another merchant, there should definitely be an improvement in enforcement of the street vendor rules of cleaning up their trash and not stocking so much inventory on the street at once, as suggested by another merchant.<sup>67</sup>

A few of the other issues addressed by the merchants was a request for an increase of police coverage at the Italian Market over the weekend, especially traffic cops. There is a need for benches for some of the older customers as well as restrooms for the throngs of people who flood the market during the summer months. The need of signage to outline the boundaries of the Italian Market and to direct people has been recommended, especially since a number of merchants have been seeing more tourists go through the market.<sup>68</sup>

All of these complaints and recommendations by the merchants had been partially addressed in the 1978 plan. Although the 1978 plan had not been implemented, it appears that at least one of the issues will not fall on deaf ears twenty years later. The interview

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<sup>66</sup>Temple University Urban Archives (Clippings of Market), "End of Pushcart Jam Demanded on S. Ninth Street." February 29, 1948.

<sup>67</sup>Cope Linder Associates, Italian Market Canopy Replacement Feasibility Study, p. 8-11.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid, p.8-11.



conducted by the Eastern College graduate, Sean Mills, has gone a bit more in-depth in explaining the issues that are of concern to the merchants. These interviews are essential for an understanding of how the merchants are thinking and how that relates to the changes that will be brought to bear upon the Market itself.

The first question posed to the merchants was what factors could be identified that have a negative impact upon the business at the Market. One of the main issues was the uncleanliness of the area. Over half of the merchants interviewed feel that an overall improvement in appearance is necessary to improve business. A few suggestions were made to remove the dumpsters from public view as well as improve trash pick-up and street cleaning services. Yet, this leads to complaints of a lack of cooperation with the city and a decrease in services they are entitled to. Inadequate police coverage was a major complaint, as well as the lack of enforcement of regulations and lack of support by the city to promote the Italian Market as a city attraction.<sup>69</sup> It is interesting to note that these complaints are almost identical to the problems acknowledged by the merchants in the 1978 plan. The same themes are repeated over and over again, but the refurbishment plan will not be the answer to all their complaints.

Abandonment of property and the dilapidated state of the upper floors in a majority of the buildings was also noted as a negative affect on the Italian Market. As I shop around the area, the shabbiness of the buildings and the number of vacant storefronts gives me the sense of an area which is struggling. The Italian Market appears to be shrinking with the stores being concentrated closer to the center of the area between Fitzwater and Federal Street, while the stores on the fringes appear to be no longer within

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<sup>69</sup>Sean Mills. Eastern College Survey of the Italian Market, p. 2. Please note: The survey was given to me by Linda Dotorr of the City Planning Commission of Philadelphia. These results were not published but used to assist the City Planning Commission in their survey of the Italian Market. The interviews took place in the summer of 1995. Sean Mills was an intern at that time.



the “boundaries.” According to the citywide inventory of Philadelphia Shops, which was conducted by the City Planning Commission, in 1995 there was over 221 square feet of gross leasable area (GLA) on the Ninth Street corridor. The gross leasable space is the amount of property available for commercial enterprises. In 1988, the GLA was at 184 with a vacancy percentage of 12.5. The vacancy percentage was 26.2 in 1995, an increase of 13.7 %. These figures are the latest available and are a visible indication of the problems the Market is experiencing in keeping its stores filled.<sup>70</sup>

A number of merchants had also mentioned that the lack of proper customer service by some of the vendors and other operators was driving customers away. As a shopper in the Italian Market, I had never experienced any overly rude merchants, but in two instances I have seen where some African-American customers were either ignored or treated poorly. I am not sure if this was an exception or a usual occurrence by this particular vendor.<sup>71</sup>

The rest of the negative aspects of the Market ranged from merchant to merchant. Some of the concerns included the traffic dangers for the pedestrians. The Italian Market is very difficult for the customer to walk around in because of the vendors packed along the streets, trucks parked on the streets which block your view of oncoming traffic and the need to dodge other people as well as dumpsters, trash piles and barrels with open fires. The lack of public bathrooms is an inconvenience as well as the lack of places to sit down and socialize. A few mentioned that the pressure of large chain stores were draining their customer base, but the Italian Market’s ability to sell items beyond the

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<sup>70</sup>Philadelphia City Planning Commission, Philadelphia Shops Update: A Citywide Inventory of Retail Centers, (Philadelphia: 1996), p.6. The 221 square feet include the entire Ninth Street corridor from Fitzwater to Federal Streets, and the first, second and occasional third floors.

<sup>71</sup>The particular incident I am referring to occurred on January 19, 1998. I observed it while I was shopping at one of the vendor’s stands on Ninth Street.





generic options in the bigger stores is an asset.<sup>72</sup>

The most interesting question asked in the interview was “Given the absolute ideal situation, what could this market be like? What’s your dream for what the market could become?” The unified vision of the Market was lacking and a variety of ideas was expressed. This lack of vision could change with the completion of the Refurbishment Plan. The images of the Market included the consumers being able to find what they need at a good price. They would like the atmosphere of the Market to be more appealing to the customer by giving the Ninth Street corridor a festive look with a variety of events (street fairs), an indication of the Market’s location in area (signs, standardized canopies, etc.), an Italian ethnic theme reflected in the “look” of the Market, and bathroom facilities. The ethnic theme portion was especially interesting, and my thoughts turned to the Villa de Roma on Ninth Street. The building’s bricks are colored Red, Green and White for the Italian flag and it reminded me of some of the buildings in Little Italy, New York. The Italian flag colors adorn a number of buildings and are a recognizable aspect of Little Italy. That the merchants would want to include this in their new image of the Market was rather surprising. They also suggested more restaurants and cappuccino / cafe shops along the Market to supposedly bring more tourists.<sup>73</sup>

The rest of the suggestions have to do with aspects of the Market’s location appeal. The need to have owners halt the deterioration of their buildings was suggested as well as the need to keep trash under control. Three merchants even suggested construction of a clear dome over the whole street. The radical introduction of such a mechanism into the market would not only be detrimental to its historic integrity, but

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<sup>72</sup>Sean Mills, pg. 4.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid, p. 5.



prohibitively expensive for the merchants as well. There has also been a problem of a number of merchants feeling that each person should do their own thing and that the sense of community has been missing.<sup>74</sup>

The members of the Italian Market Business Association do not include all of the merchants along Ninth Street and some feel that it's not as powerful as it needs to be.<sup>75</sup> Since the Business Association is not fully supported by the entire Market, its lack of unifying control limits the ability to impose sweeping changes. The Business Association members are, apparently, limited to the merchants and doesn't include the vendors. The need for the vendors to be supported and accepted by the merchants is essential for a successful Business association. The Market's survival will not be because of one or two people leading the area into the 21st Century, the entire group of merchants and vendors must be united to ensure the success of the Market as a whole. The plan being implemented will supposedly give the Market a unified look for the customers, but the unification must go beyond that to be successful. Unfortunately, preservation has been relatively ignored by the merchants, but a long-term plan might convince them of its importance to the Market.

The canopy/awning issue was mentioned by a number of the merchants surveyed. This issue is what is being addressed by the Cope Linder Associates study and partially funded by grants from the Philadelphia Commercial Development Corporation. Unfortunately, feelings ranged from preferring corrugated metal canopies to translucent fiberglass canopies. The large complaint was that the canopies hang too far over the sidewalk and are constantly hit by passing trucks. The poles, which hold the canopies, are

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>75</sup>Mills, pg. 3.



weak as well and are susceptible to bending from the impact of passing vehicles. The attaching of the tarps from the vendors onto the canopy was another complaint from a few of the merchants, who suggested the vendor's carts should hold up the tarps themselves. These complaints are just a few of the issues which were studied by Cope Linder Associates and their Canopy Design and Feasibility Study. The merchants' views were taken into account for the proposals, but money was the limiting factor.

The final results of the study led Cope-Linder Associates to offer the merchants a number of different options for the canopies and awnings lining the Italian Market. The awnings colors were originally based on a industrial tarp which the vendors wanted to continue using. The colors were only offered in a very dark blue that was rather unappealing. One of the ideas of the improvements for the Market is to move away from the darkness and "grunginess" of the corrugated metal and instead introduce some bright colors (red, greens, yellows and whites). The awning option decided upon moved away from the industrial tarp and instead offered a colorful awning made of fire-treated fabric. One of the concerns of the vendors was the flying ashes and embers from the open drum fires. The fabric, available in red, green and yellow, is treated to be fire-resistant. Canopies made with it would be quite bright and would be retractable which will help them last longer. The idea was to make the awning both functional and easy to care for.<sup>76</sup>

The very first coverings used in the Market were fabric awnings over the storefronts. As the merchants expanded their business onto the sidewalks, the fabric awnings were replaced by metal canopies. The canopies have traditionally been made of corrugated metal and replaced as needed. Historic photographs reveal the canopies pre-dating World War II and made of that type of metal (Figure A-2). Cope Linder

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<sup>76</sup>Cope Linder Associates, Italian Market Canopy Feasibility Study, pg. 16.



Associates offered the option of corrugated metal or fiberglass. Different merchants appear to have a preference for both of these options, but the Historical Commission had a preference for the corrugated metal. They felt that the metal canopies had a historical precedent and the use of bowed trusses in the framing was significant as well. Even though this area has no historical designation, the Historical Commission was interested in looking over the various proposals being presented. Originally, the trusses were to be saved wherever they could, but because of escalating costs the idea was abandoned.<sup>77</sup> The metal and fiberglass canopies remain an option to the merchants and a few have already installed the fiberglass canopies on their own which adds a considerable amount of light to the sidewalk.

The canopies have been installed onto the buildings in a number of different ways over the years. The flashing on the facade of some of the buildings acts as a ledge for some of the canopies. Other buildings still have their original decorative cornices above the first floor, which has enabled a number of owners to secure the canopies onto those features. The final method used to attach the canopy to the building is to insert metal anchors in the brick mortar joints. Along Ninth Street between Washington and Ellsworth Street, at the old Ice and Coal building, the canopies are supported by angled metal rods inserted into the upper portion of the facade walls.

The grant money will be offered to the various merchants by the Philadelphia Commercial Development Corporation. They will have to put the money up front to the contractors for the canopies and, hopefully, they will decide to improve their facades at the same time. When the work is completed and inspected by the PCDC, they will

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<sup>77</sup>Bob Keppel, Interview by author, April 1, 1998.





reimburse the merchant for a percentage of the cost of the canopy.<sup>78</sup> Unfortunately, a number of different obstacles ranging from political to economical have contributed to the delay of the implementation of the plan. Hopefully, a demonstration project of one or two properties will be completed by the end of the summer. The hope is that when the merchants see the improvements made it will convince them to invest money in their property as well.

The Cope-Linder Associates Study was more inclusive when it was first presented to the merchants and the PCDC. The financing of the project, after it went to the contractors, caused a considerable number of changes to be implemented to help fit the project within a specific budget. The PCDC was originally going to offer the merchants money through its Unified Facade Treatment Program. The necessary improvements to the facades would have ranged from repairing the cornices, installing frames and sills on masonry sealed windows, installing frames, sill and mullions for windows sealed with metal or wood, repointing brick and removing non-conforming signs.<sup>79</sup> In all these proposed improvement, there was no implication that strict preservation or rehabilitation standards would be followed. Unfortunately, it was considered too prohibitively expensive to perform an in-depth study of the buildings' materials for an accurate restoration or rehabilitation of the properties.

The funding by PCDC is now a grant program since the projected costs had increased considerably when it went to bid.<sup>80</sup> The facade improvements no longer have to follow the 'strict' guidelines laid out by the PCDC. The lack of money has been one of the reasons for the delay along with inaction by a large number of the merchants and

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<sup>78</sup>Bob Keppel, Interview by author, April 1, 1998.

<sup>79</sup>Cope Linder Associates, Italian Market Canopy Replacement Feasibility Study, pg. 20-21.

<sup>80</sup>The exact dollar amounts are not available to be published. Bob Keppel provided estimates to refer to for this thesis.



property owners. The facades still need to be repaired, the windows fixed and the graffiti removed from the buildings. This is all to be done before the canopies are to be replaced. Since the merchants are now responsible for the costs of this part of the project, they have balked and caused the project to stall. Vernon Anastasio, a member of the Italian Market Business Association stated, “ We want to get it over with. Either you’re in or you’re out.”<sup>81</sup> The reconstruction of the street and the replacement of the water and gas lines was completed late last year. It was at this point that the merchants were to take over and complete their repairs to ensure the completion of the project by this Spring. Mr. Keppel is optimistic in hoping that a portion of the Market will be done by the end of this year.

The Italian Market and its immediate future are, once again, hinging on the actions or inactions of the merchants who occupy the buildings. Business continues as usual with the vendors hawking their products to the passing customers and the shops filled with many different delights. The 1978 plan and the Refurbishment Plan attempted to solve the numerous problems of a twentieth century market placed in a nineteenth century neighborhood. The preservation issues, ignored by both plans, are disturbing because the Italian Market is so rich in history. However, the Refurbishment Plan, when completed, will uplift the image of the Market to the local customers and tourists by unifying the streetscape. The need remains for a long-term plan to study the Italian Market and interpret it to the public as a neighborhood commercial core. The Italian Market was once the cradle for a large influx of immigrants and the core for a number of ethnic groups. The understanding of the immigrants’ past and the interpretation of the building fabric are designed into the historic collage of the Market. Although the plans of 1978 and 1998 are aggressive in their attempt to solve the practical problems of the Market, they ignore

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<sup>81</sup>Barrie Klein, “Shopkeepers Stalling Italian Market Makeovers,” Philadelphia Weekly, (Feb. 4, 1998).



the critical importance of its historic past.



## **Conclusion:**

### **The Thoughts of a Preservationist, an American and an Immigrant's Child**

When I was searching for a thesis topic, I was interested in finding a site or issue which would be close to my heart. The Italian Market was a perfect choice because it represents a number of different things to me. As a preservationist, I see it as an opportunity to reveal a part of Philadelphia history that has been largely ignored in the historic sites throughout the city. As an American, I see the Italian Market as an excellent collection of specialty and neighborhood shops that offers me a selection unavailable at the local supermarket. The Market's character is revealed in the calling of the vendors along the sidewalks, the loud squawks of the chickens as they await their death, the hanging cheese which draws you into De' Bruno's Cheese shop and the fresh pasta offered at Ralph's Restaurant. As an immigrant's child, the Italian Market is a reflection of my past and a part of my future. In cities across the nation, ethnic neighborhoods are the roots for many Americans and a beginning for the immigrants who continue to flood this nation.

The previous chapter discussed one plan which was never implemented and another which is designed to improve the image of the Italian Market. The two plans were designed for immediate action and not for long-term study and implementation. The focus of the current plan is very specific and is hoping to address just one aspect of the Italian Market's problem. Historic preservation has taken a back seat to both of the plans, and the neighborhood's importance other than as an economic entity has been ignored as well. As a preservationist, I believe there are a number of issues and ideas that need to be





discussed and studied to ensure the success of the Market into the twenty-first century. I am proposing a long-term plan (1-20 Years) which will address issues of both the physical and emotional aspects of the Market. I feel the Market's potential to be both a viable economic core and a teaching tool for the city can work interchangeably. My proposals are very optimistic, but with the support of the South Philadelphia community and the preservation community, I feel this is a reachable goal.

The first stage of my proposed long-term plan would be initiated within one to five years. It would need to be implemented after the current Refurbishment project has been completed for some time and its success can be properly judged. The first step would be the creation of a non-profit entity that would work to encourage the use of the Italian Market as a teaching tool about immigrant neighborhoods and how they are an important aspect of Philadelphia. It would be a small organization with its trustees and advisers consisting of merchants from the Market, concerned community residents, preservationists and ethno-historians. A non-profit organization would need to be established because it could concentrate and focus on the importance of the Market in a historical context. It can then begin to make plans to integrate it into the various historic sites around Philadelphia. There is currently a tour offered of the Italian Market area, but it is primarily focused on the influence of Organized Crime.<sup>82</sup> Philadelphia's main historic sites are focused on the eighteenth and nineteenth century when Philadelphia was at its peak of national importance. The Italian Market would be an excellent example in revealing to this city a twentieth century immigrant neighborhood and how it transformed into the Italian Market of today. During this first stage, the organization would have to decide upon one of the properties with a high level of integrity (perhaps a vacant one?) in

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<sup>82</sup> Bob Keppel. Interview with Author, April 1, 1998. This tour is not overly popular with the merchants because the tour is based more on mob "myths" than fact.



the Market to serve as the focal point of the presentation to the public. A comprehensive study of the site would need to be conducted, including the building, the shop and its occupants' history. The eventual goal, to be reached in stage two, would be to have a small house museum and a tour of the Market open to the public. An example of a similar site is The Lower East Side Tenement Museum in New York. It is one of the most interesting and powerful sites I have ever visited. The building is still undergoing restoration in some of the first floor apartments but the apartments on the second floor are available to tour. The stories of the occupants are told by the tour guide and the apartments are filled with original belongings from the families. The tour starts in a building across the street where a video is shown of the living family members relating their experiences about the tenement apartments. It is extremely emotional when you see the video and then tour the apartments. I believe a similar experience could be portrayed in the Market as well. Whereas the focus in the Lower East Side Tenement museum is on the living arrangements of the families, in the site I am proposing, the focus would be on the dual role the building played for the family. The shop on the first floor would be interpreted in conjunction with the living spaces on the second and third floor. The importance of the shop to the family and to the Italian Market would be essential in the message relayed to the public.

The benefit of having a non-profit organization in place is their ability to apply for grants from the government and a number of foundations. They can also organize a membership campaign to collect tax-deductible donations and community support. It is essential that the organization will have the ability to fund itself in order to be successful. The museum would, hopefully, bring new people into the Market and would lead to an increase of business for the merchants. This might convince the businessmen to support



the museum and the message it is trying to teach.

The final aspect of the first stage of the long-term plan I am suggesting would be a comprehensive study of the building fabric and its evolution since the establishment of the Market. This would entail a detailed study of not only the exterior, but the interior of the buildings as well. It would be essential to take paint and mortar samples of all the original fabric that remains to ensure that an accurate treatment of some of the buildings could be recorded and accomplished in the third stage. The idea is to have a complete understanding of the physical make-up of the entire Ninth Street corridor.

The second stage (5 to 10 years) of my long-term plan would be to address the abandonment of a number of the upper floors of the buildings throughout the Market. The issue has been largely ignored by the Refurbishment Plan because they have called for a “proper” sealing of the upper floors. They have not explored possible options to solve the problem. The problem with a majority of the buildings is the lack of exterior doors that lead to the floors upstairs. Most of the staircases are inside the store which would limit the feasibility of renting them out. The upper floors that have not been abandoned are used as storage for merchandise, offices or homes for the merchants’ family. The repair and resealing of the windows of the upper floors will give many customers the illusion of them being occupied. Unfortunately, that does not solve the problem of them being underutilized. There is always the option of constructing an exterior entrance to the upper floors, which has been done on some of the other buildings scattered throughout the Market. When one constructs an extra door on the front of the building, it takes up valuable space inside the store, and it would be difficult for the residents to dodge the customers, stands and vendors to get to the doorway. Instead of constructing an exterior entrance on the back of the building to have access to the upper floors for tenants, the



upper floors can be the answer to another problem. The vendors often have their inventory behind them as they conduct business during the day. It would be more economical if the upper floors, which have not been used by the merchants, could be rented out to the vendors. A few of the vendors have rented space in empty stores across the street from their stands. If the upper floors were rented out at a reasonable price, it would not only bring income in for the merchant but would also alleviate the problem of large amounts of produce lining the streets.

The vacancies that are scattered throughout the Market, especially on the fringes, would also be a focus of the second stage. A long-term plan needs to ensure that businesses, which will contribute positively to the Market, be allowed to establish themselves and prosper. The merchants, when interviewed by Sean Mills, had indicated the desire for more cafes and restaurants. Unfortunately, high level of activity is generally limited to the day when the Market is operating. When the vendors and businesses shut down around dinnertime, the only business activity is the few restaurants along Ninth Street. The canopies and awnings contribute to the problem because of the darkness that envelops the sidewalks at night. Fortunately the issue of the canopies is to be resolved with the implementation of the Refurbishment Plan. Restaurants and bars might help to bring a larger crowd into the Market at night and keep pedestrian activity at a level that will give customers a sense of safety. One problem to avoid is what has happened to Manayunk, PA. The introduction of “trendy” bars and restaurants has made weekends a problem for residents with no parking and many people flooding the streets. The Market should continue to operate on a certain level at night, but one must be careful to balance an increase in business with the needs of the area residents. The community around the Market and other parts of the city would provide enough support for a few more





restaurants. The increase in exposure might also help to improve the business of the Market during the day.

The third stage (10-20 years) of my long-term plan would build upon aspects from the first and second stage. The data collected during the comprehensive study of the buildings would now be implemented into a proposal for the Market to be protected as one entity. The buildings with the most historical integrity would be suggested for nomination as an individual listing on the National Register. I am proposing individual nominations for a select group to allow the buildings the opportunity to be eligible for tax credits as non-residential properties.

A historic district is an option for a neighborhood that is historically significant on the local and national level. In the instance of the Italian Market, I feel that its overall significance would be better argued on the local level. As of now, the Market is not in any danger of being destroyed by a developer or drastically altered by a shift in building use. The future is not as clear, and this is one of the reasons I believe it needs to be protected. I am uncomfortable designating this corridor a historic district since some of its integrity has been compromised. I feel it would be more beneficial if it was created into a conservation district. As a conservation district, the buildings' of the Ninth Street corridor would be protected and respected.

One of the positive aspects to a conservation district compared to a historic district (in Philadelphia) are the funding options. A conservation district can offer a revolving loan program and grants. These avenues of funding would give merchants the tools needed to restore their buildings if they had not been individually listed on the National Register and eligible for tax breaks. The Italian Market's one negative aspect in



eligibility is that it is a commercial district rather than a residential neighborhood.<sup>83</sup> Its importance to the surrounding neighborhood as a stable shopping district should be a factor that makes it eligible to be a conservation district. It is difficult to offer specific arguments for their inclusion since the existence of a district of this kind in Philadelphia doesn't exist. I am basing my ideas on districts that have been enacted in other cities.

Regardless, the non-profit organization that I had recommended in the first stage of the long-term plan would be the principal association that would help to promote this district to the Italian Market. The support of the merchants is essential and the ability to show them the benefits of such a district would be the same as the argument for their support of the museum. The merchants want to do what is good for the market, but the bottom line will always be the deciding factor. The presentation of the benefits of designation to the merchants will allow them to not only protect their assets, but also gain access to funding rehabilitation efforts as well.

Although conservation districts are not an available option to the preservationists in Philadelphia in 1998, I am confident that they would eventually be enacted during the third stage of my plan. A conservation district would be the best choice because of a number of changes the neighborhood has undergone over the years. It is important to have as many buildings rehabilitated as possible, but it is essential to allow the neighborhood to continue to reflect its evolution. I believe that if all the buildings were brought back to a specific time, such as the early 1920's, a large portion of its history would be ignored. The conservation district would respect the differences of the various buildings along Ninth Street, but would enhance management of the future. The

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<sup>83</sup>John Milner Associates, The Philadelphia Neighborhood Conservation District, (Philadelphia:1992) p. 1-8.



guidelines for the conservation district would not be as strict and would allow the changes that had been implemented to the buildings to remain. The chances of having it supported by the local community would be greatly improved if the merchants and other property owners feel that they will retain a large degree of control over their buildings.

The last section to be implemented in stage three of my long-term plan is the establishment of an “immigrant trail” in the city of Philadelphia. This city is rich in its collection of various ethnic neighborhoods that have contributed to the diversity witnessed today. The neighborhoods to be chosen would be ethnic or immigrant communities that have been established for a number of years and are an example of a “city within a city.” Each community would need to have a group already organized and its interpretive study completed. Chinatown would be one example of another neighborhood that could be part of the trail. It would be ideal because it is a community that established an urban enclave with a large concentration of Chinese residents and supporting commercial core. The purpose is to present the public with a history of immigrant and ethnic groups who struggled in this city and responded by establishing a community that became their own. The history of the “dead white men” and early American history has been told for years in this city and it is imperative that the immigrant and ethnic groups which have helped to shape Philadelphia in the twentieth century be studied. This aspect of the plan hinges on the reception by the other neighborhoods to establishing small historic sites in which to link the story together.

In this thesis, my goal was to understand the immigrants who established and lived along the Italian Market. The Italians had taken over a community which had been built decades before and had transformed the neighborhood to fit their needs. The



building and physical aspects of the Market have been ignored. It is the buildings that are a reflection of the Italians' need and can be seen by the changes in the first floor of their businesses. The Italian Market's importance exceeds that of merely being an economic entity, because it is a reflection of an immigrant enclave that has grown into an established South Philadelphia community. The study of the building fabric reflects the ethnic influence and through this, the future needs to be planned. The 1978 plan and the 1998 Refurbishment Plan are limited in scope and are unable to see beyond the economic benefits of the Market. The long-term plan that has been proposed is to encompass the economic power of the Market with its historical integrity and present this unified story of the public. The tourists have begun to arrive in the Italian Market in increasing numbers, and the opportunity to present a portion of immigrant history in Philadelphia is at hand. It is my hope and desire that the Preservation community and the community of the Italian Market will join to preserve their history for the future.





## United States Census Data

### 1880 - Ward 2 & 3, Roll # 1168

765 S. Ninth Street - McStocker, Francis, Margaret, Lydia, Charles. Francis is a [ ], Margaret stays home, Lydia is a school teacher and Charles attends school. Francis is an Irish immigrant.

764 S. Ninth Street - McClonce, Thomas and Ellen. Thomas is retired and Ellen stays home. Ellen McDermmon is the widowed servant. All three are natives of Ireland.

734 S. Ninth Street - Burke, Joseph, Jessie, Lizzie and James. Joseph is a [ ] cutter and is a native of Ireland. Jessie and Lizzie are natives of Ireland and James is an American.

940 S. Ninth Street - Keihl, Henry and Kats. Jake and Leipold Millin are boarders. Henry is a shoemaker and his wife stays home. Jake is a baker and Leipold is a piano maker. They are all natives of Germany. Located in the same building is Robert, Hilda, Lizzie and Elma McCalla. Lizzie is a seamstress and they are natives of Pennsylvania.

934 S. Ninth Street - Hutchinson, A., Frediniaisn and Francis. Mr. Hutchinson is a baker and all are from Germany.

912 S. Ninth Street - Williams, William, Tanic, Lily and Sophia Gilmore (mother - in - law). William is a waiter and Tanic is a cook. Mary, Ida and Vanhoten Powell are boarders. Mary is a servant, Ida works in services and Vanhoten is an errand boy. The Holland family rents another apartment at this location. David,



the head, is a laborer while his wife stays home with their three children. John Howard, a barber, is renting with his wife. Richard Howard is a laborer and his wife stays home with their four children. The final lodger is John Benson who is a waiter. These residents are native African - Americans.

908 S. Ninth Street- Cunio, Joseph, Moriah and three sons. Joseph is a butcher and a native Italian. Moriah is of Irish descent and have her siblings (Lydia, James and Ellen) living with them as well. Lydia is a nurse, James is a laborer and Ellen is paralyzed.

907 S. Ninth Street - Lapotino, Joe, Catherine, and Joseph. Joe is an engineer from Italy and his family (including his parents, brother and sister) other than his parents are from Pennsylvania.

927 S. Ninth Street - [ ]sraib, Abconidia, Renes and mother - in - law Amy. Abconidia is a Peddler and all are natives from Holland.

925 S. Ninth Street - Robinson. Charles and Ammie. Charles is a tailor and both are natives of Germany.

943 S. Ninth Street - Casseady, Sarah and children Richard, Mary, William and James. Sarah is from Ireland while her children are native Americans. Richard is a laborer and James is a bottler.

1003 S. Ninth Street - Ramas, Salferino, Ellen and Frederick (brother). Salferino and Frederick, natives of Cuba, are cigar makers.

#### **1900 - Enumerated District #67, Roll 1453**

735 S. Ninth Street - Pargal, S., Mary and their two children. Parents are from Italy and the husband is a dealer.

Berteafino, Leonard and Mary. They are from Italy and Leonard is a day laborer.



Copato, Anthony, Carmela and four children. Parents are from Italy and Anthony is a tailor. Mancanz, Jacob and Francis. They are both from Italy and Jacob is a tailor.

Precioure, Toney and Lizzie. They are both from Italy and Toney is a barber.

737 S. Ninth Street - Green, Max, Etta, their daughter and Margaret Richardson who is an Irish servant. Max, a native Russian, is a schoolteacher.

739 S. Ninth Street - Manrino, John, Mary and six children. John is a day laborer and owns this property. They are all natives of Italy and had immigrated in 1892.

749 S. Ninth Street - Burima[ ], Catherine and two children. They are natives of Italy and her children are both a driver and a barber.

Rocco, Joseph and Rose - Joseph is a druggist and both are natives of Italy.

Lemine, Vito and Mary. Lemine is a silversmith and both are natives of Italy.

DeRuggiero, Leonard, Theresa and two sisters. Leonard is an upholsterer and all are natives of Italy.

759 S. Ninth Street - Shults, Morris, Mary and two sons. Morris is a tailor and the parents are Russian.

839 S. Ninth Street - Stephano, Joseph is a native of Italy and a watchman.

Berti, Salvator and Mary. Salvator is a barber and both are from Italy.

Poleo, Frank, Josephine and three children. Frank is a day laborer and his son is a printer. The parents are from Italy.

Poleo, Stephen, Kate and Frank (son). Stephen is a hatter and is from Italy (as is Kate).

764 S. Ninth Street - Arna, Joseph, Josephine and four children. Joseph is a contractor and the parents are from Italy.

Nepoliell, Felix and Irsa. They are natives of Italy and Feliz is a shoemaker.



Arna, Humberto and Alfonsino. They are natives of Italy and Humberto is a bricklayer. As boarders, they are joined by Nicola Chieffa and Alf DelGuero who are day laborers from Italy.

756 S. Ninth Street - P[a]lumbo, Frank, Felomina and daughter Angelina. Frank is a tailor from Italy. They run a boarding house which has 13 native Italian boarders.

746 S. Ninth Street - Tiarso, Jacob, Rose and four children. Jacob and Rose are native Italians and he is a stonemason. They have one boarder who is Italian and is also a stonemason.

734 S. Ninth Street - Libiger, Morris, Sarah and five children. They are Russian and Sarah is a tailor.

Brode, Ma[ ], Dorah and two sons. They are Russian and the husband is a tinsmith.

Brooklin, Philip, Moley and six children. They are Russian and Philip is a dealer. Moranzo, Louie is a Russian boarder employed as a tailor.

Mazola, Lubrute, Lohanna and two children. The parents are Italians and Lubrute is a day laborer.

Lenda, Mary and her three children. She is a native Italian and a tailor.

807 S. Ninth Street - Paaolo, P., Fimona and four children. The husband is a horseshoer and the parents are both Italians.

Pastolia, Anthony and Sipaldi. Anthony is a barber and both are from Italy.

Larro, Angello, Artalio and Maria. Angello is a barber and the parents are from Italy.

Masino, Dominick, Alsvia and one daughter. Dominick is a bricklayer and they have four boarders who are all from Italy.





825 S. Ninth Street - Alexander, Petro, Clara and six children. Petro is a grocer and all are from Italy except the youngest child.

**1910 - Enumeration District #41, 42; Roll # 1387**

922 S. Ninth Street - Cardoni, Tony, Grajia and one son. Tony is an ice cream [ ] and the parents are from Italy.

Scuiaro, C. & F. and brother Angelo & F. Both brothers are fruit dealers and from Italy.

934 S. Ninth Street - Natali, Donmeinico, Consiglia and six children. Donmeinico is a grocer and from Italy.

1008 S. Ninth Street - Mammerllo, Gaetano, wife and three children. Gaetano is a grocer and first generation Italian-American.

929 S. Ninth Street - Ginuta, Pietro and Maria. Pietro is a butcher and has a boarder, also a butcher, named Salvatore Vitillo. They are all from Italy.

1030 S. Ninth Street - Guiuto, Casgual, Angela and four children. They are all Italians and Casgual is a wholesale grocer.

749 S. Ninth Street - Gonoze, Joseph and Rosa with two children. Joseph is a Railroad laborer and from Italy.

Tony Dolise (and family) is also a Railroad laborer from Italy.

Frederick Brolis (and family) is a factory laborer and they are all from Italy except for the youngest child.

803 S. Ninth Street - Schiavo, Francesco, Rosa and two children. Francesco and his son are fruit dealers from Italy.

Oriente, Alsandro, Maddelina and three children. The parents are from Italy and Alsandro is a stonemason.



Servilli, Guisippi and Adeline are from Italy. Guisippi is a baker.

Antonelli, Giovanni, Rosina and two children. Giovanni is a laborer and the parents are from Italy.

Frains, Isidora, Giorgia and one child. They are all from Italy and Isidora is a laborer.

Demarco, H., Devina and four children. The husband is a laborer and is from Italy (as is Devina).



# Italian Market Building Survey

Date: Spring, 1998

Street: Ninth Street Corridor

Page 84

<b>Address and Name of Store (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Building Description</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Awning/Canopy</b>
734 S. 9th Street : Sarcone's Deli (1st Floor), 4 stories	Brick Rowhouse, Apts.	Good	No
736 S. 9th Street : Store empty, 3 stories	Multi-color Brick Row, Apts.	Graffiti	No
738 S. 9th Street: Store empty, 3 stories, 2 doors	Brick Row, Dec. Cornice	OK	No (Bricks need repointing)
740 S. 9th Street: Apts., 3 stories, original stoop	Brick Row (1st) and Stucco	Good	No (Asphalt Shingles)
742 S. 9th Street: House, 3 stories	Faux Stone, Yellow Brick	Good	Striped Awning (cloth)
744 S. 9th Street: Maria's Beauty Shop, 3 stories	Brick Row, Projecting Bays	Good	Pink Awning (Retractable)
	Vinyl Siding on Cornice		
746 S. 9th Street: House, 3 stories (infill?), stoop	Multi-color Brick	Good	No
748 S. 9th Street: Apts., 3 stories, door to basement	Brick Row (original?)	OK	No (Bricks need repointing)
750 S. 9th Street: House, 3 stories, stoop	Faux Stone Facade	Good	No
752 S. 9th Street: Apts., 2 doors, 3 stories	Brick Row, Upper Brick is	Good	No
Side Alley Entrance	different (original?)		
754 S. 9th Street: House, 3 stories, stoop	Faux Stone Facade, Bay	Good	No
	window and pent eave		
756 & 758 S. 9th Street: Sarcone's Bakery (1918), Apts	Brick Row, Pent Eave	Good	Yes, Fiberglass Canopy
3 stories and 4 doors (3 enter to bakery)			
760 S. 9th Street: Ralph's Italian Restaurant (1900), 3	Brick Row, veranda (2nd)	Good	Glass addition on 1st Flr
stories, green historical Information sign	decorative cornice		
762 S. 9th Street: House, 3 stories, street furniture	Brick Row, Bay window (1)	Good	No, stoop
764 S. 9th Street: store empty, 3 stories	Brick Row, painted pink,	Good	No
	Decorative Cornice		
9th & Catharine: Store empty, 3 floors	Brick Row, painted white,	OK	No
	Decorative Cornice		
800 S. 9th Street: Antique Shop, 3 stories, apts(?)	Pink & Grey Stucco	Good	Yes
802 S. 9th Street: Store empty, apts., 3 stories, 2 doors	Brick Row	OK	no

## Notes:



# Italian Market Building Survey

Date: Spring, 1998

Street: Ninth Street

Page: 85

Address and Store Name (if applicable)	Building Description	Status	Awning/Canopy
804 S. 9th Street: Apts., 3 stories	Multi-colored Brick Row	Good	No
806 S. 9th Street: Store Empty, 3 stories, apts.	Faux Stone Facade, added	OK	No
	Dormer, damage to facade		
808 S. 9th Street: store empty, apts., 3 stories, 2 doors	Faux stone facade and aluminum siding (2,3)	OK	No
810 S. 9th Street: store empty, apts., 3 stories, 2 doors	Brick Row, dormers	Good	No
812 S. 9th Street: store empty, apts., 4 stories	Row, stucco, pent eave	OK	No
814 S. 9th Street: 9th St. Book & Records, apts., 3 stories, 2 doors	Row, stucco, aluminum siding on cornice, dormers	Good	No
816 & 818 S. 9th Street: Khmer-Angkor Jewelry, 3 stories, apts.	Brick Row (818), stucco (816), projecting bays	Good	No, dormers
820 S. 9th Street: Dan Khang Nha Trang, Inc., 3 stories apartments	Brick row, decorative cap	Good	No, sign protruding from facade
822-826 S. 9th Street: store empty, 3 stories, apts.	Brick row, projecting bay	Good	Awning, retracted & torn
	bricks different shades		
9th & Christian Street: Lorenzo Pizza, 3 stories, sealed	Brick row, projecting bays,	OK	Canopy, metal
also George's famous Sandwiches	decorative cornice		
9th Street (off of Salter Street): The Flower Basket, 3 stories, new storefront, store extends on sidewalk	Brick row, aluminum siding on cornice, faux facade?	OK	Canopy, metal
9th & Salter Street: The Spice Corner, 3 stories, sealed store extends on sidewalk	Brick row, projecting bays	OK	Canopy, metal
910 S. 9th Street: store empty, apts, 3 stories	Yellow Brick, quoins, stone	Good	Partial canopy, along Salter
	beltcourse under 2nd floor		
920 S. 9th Street (off Montrose St.): Frankie's Choice of Meat, 1 story	Brick Row, windows bricked up	OK	Canopy, metal
922 S. 9th Street: Renzulli's Italian Ice, 3 stories, Apts.	Brick Row, 1st flr is new	Good	Canopy, metal
924-926 S. 9th Street: Claudio's Italian Market Cheese Co., 3 stories, apts.	Brick row, decorative cornice, needs repointing	Good	Canopy, metal
928 S. 9th Street (Corner of Hall St.): Bar, 2 stories, apts.	Brick row, aluminum siding	Good	No, new windows on 2nd

## Notes:





# Italian Market Building Survey

Date: Spring, 1998

Street: Ninth Street

Page: 86

<b>Address and Name of Store (if Applicable)</b>	<b>Building Description</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Awning/Canopy</b>
930 S. 9th Street: DiBruno Bros. "The House of Cheese"	Row with Brick along edges	OK	Canopy, metal
upper floors are offices or storage, 4 stories	Decorative Cornice, stone		
932-936 S. 9th Street: Villa de Roma, 3 stories, apts.	First floor has glass enclosure projecting from	OK	No
brick of 936 S. 9th is red, green and white	building 936 s.9th is brick		
938 S. 9th Street, store empty, 3 stories	Brick row with aluminum siding	OK	Canopy, metal
940 S. 9th Street: U.S. Dollar, 3 stories, apts.	2nd flr has stucco scored with etched designs	Good	Canopy, metal
942 S. 9th Street: store empty, 3 stories, apts.	same	Good	Awning, vinyl
946 S. 9th Street: Talluto's Authentic Italian Food, 3 stories, apts.	same	Good	Awning, vinyl
1000-1004 S. 9th Street: C&S Discount, 3 stories, storage	Brick Row with projecting bay windows	Very Good	Canopy
1006-1008 S. 9th Street: Fante's (1906), 2 1/2 and 3 stories, apts.	Brick row with aluminum over cornice Middle building has lintel over windows	Good	Awning, green cloth
1010 S. 9th Street: store empty, 3 stories, apts.	Row with aluminum siding	Good	Canopy, metal
	on upper floors, projecting bay		
1012 S. 9th Street: store empty, 3 stories, apts?	1st flr stucco and brick on	OK	No
graffiti with no sign of life	upper flrs, decorative arches		
1014 S. 9th Street: unnamed store, 3 stories, apts.	applied multi-colored brick,	OK	Canopy, metal
graffiti	projecting shingles with hint of original brick		
1016 S. 9th Street: Linen store, 3 stories, apts	stucco with hint of original brick	OK	Canopy, metal
	cornice with aluminum sid.		
1035 S. 9th Street: Anastasi 2 Seafood, 3 stories, storage?	Brick row with glass cubes	OK	Canopy, metal
	for upper windows		
1037 S. 9th Street: Guy Giordano & Sons, 3 stories, apts	Yellow & red brick, applied?	OK	Canopy, metal
	1st flr. window gone		
1039 S. 9th Street: Hollywood Meat Market (1934), apts	Brick row with scored	Good	Canopy, metal
3 stories, fire insurance insignia	stucco, decorative cornice		

## Notes:



# Italian Market Building Survey

Date: Spring, 1998

Street: Ninth Street

Page: 87

<b>Address and Name of Store (if applicable)</b>	<b>Building Description</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Awning/Canopy</b>
1041-1043 S. 9th Street: Giordano's (1921): 3 stories, apts., fire insurance insignia, first floor completely open	Brick Row with projecting bay, decorative cornice	Good	Canopy, metal
1101-1105 S. 9th Street: Anastasi Seafood. 1 story	The building is open to the sidewalk	OK	Canopy, metal
1018 S. 9th Street: General Merchandise, 3 stories, apts	Brick painted, cornice covered by alum. siding	OK	Canopy, metal
1022 S. 9th Street: Evantash, 3 stories, apts	Brick row with projecting bay, decorative cornice	OK	Canopy, Fiberglass
1024 S. 9th Street: storage for vendors, 3 stories	Brick Row, stucco, pressed metal for cornice	OK	Canopy, metal
1026 -1028 S. 9th Street: merchandise store, 3 stories apts., 1026 has a decorative cap	Yellow brick and red brick pressed metal for cornice	OK	Canopy, metal
1032-1034 S. 9th Street: Carnegie Sports, 3 stories, empty	Decorative Brick work is orig. with cornice. Part of applied decoration missing	Good	Canopy, metal
upper floors are boarded up from inside			
1036 S. 9th Street: Marano Groceries, 3 stories, apts?	First floor open to sidewalk cornice intact, window frames deteriorating	OK	Canopy and Awning
1038 S. 9th Street: Golden Donuts, 3 stories, empty	Scored stucco	OK	Canopy, metal
1100 S. 9th Street: J & H Restaurant, 1 story	Brick	OK	Canopy, metal
1102 S. 9th Street: A & R T-shirts (closed), 1 story	Brick, sealed up	So-So	Canopy, metal
1104 S. 9th Street: empty, 1 story, closed-up	Brick, sealed up	So-So	Canopy, metal
1106 S. 9th Street: empty, 1 story, closed up	Brick, sealed display window	So-So	Canopy, metal
1108 S. 9th Street: Irv's Plus Sizes, 1 story	Brick, sealed display window	So-So	Canopy, metal
1134-1136 S. 9th Street: empty, 3 stories, pigeons' home	Brick row with main fabric remaining, needs help	OK	Canopy frame
1138 S. 9th Street: Antique Shop, 3 stories, apts.	Brick row with cornice	Very Good	Canopy, tarp and plywood
1140 S. 9th Street: empty store, 3 stories, apts.	Brick row with recent repointing, cornice	Good	No
1142 S. 9th Street: H. Ficippello & Son (empty), 3 stories, apts.	Stucco upper floors	Good	Canopy, bad shape

## Notes:



# Italian Market Building Survey

Date: Spring, 1998

Street: Ninth Street

Page: 88

<b>Address and Store Name (if applicable)</b>	<b>Building Description</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Awning/Canopy</b>
1144 S. 9th Street: South Philadelphia Gun Shop, 3 stories, empty, upper floors sealed	Yellow brick, glass missing and frames destroyed	So-So	Canopy, Metal
1146 S. 9th Street: empty, 3 stories, storage?	Yellow brick with cornice intact	OK	Canopy, Metal
1148 S. 9th Street: Caesar's Fruit Basket, 3 stories, pats, stoop, and small shop window	Brick row with cornice & spindles	Good	Canopy, Metal
1150-1152 S. 9th street: empty, 3 stories, pats.	Brick rows with stucco	OK	Canopy, Metal
1154 -1154 1/2 S. 9th Street: empty, 3 stories	Brick rows with fire damage	Bad	Awnings torn to shreds
1156 S. 9th Street: Push Cart Saloon (empty), 3 stories	Brick row with fire damage, pent eave and bays	Bad	No
1158 S 9th Street: Drone Films, 3 stories, empty	Brick row, projecting bays	Good	Canopy Frame
1160 S. 9th Street: empty, 1 story	New store windows with tiles underneath	OK	No
1162 S. 9th Street: empty, 3 stories, empty	Brick row with cornice	OK	Canopy, metal
1164 S. 9th Street: Butcher, 3 stories, pats?, animals	Yellow brick, decorative cap, veranda	OK	Canopy, rusty
1166 S. 9th Street: John's, 3 stories, pats.	Brick Row	Good	Canopy, metal
1168 S. 9th Street: Munafo & Son, 3 stories, pats.	Aluminum Siding	Good	Canopy, metal
1179-1177 S. 9th Street: J & J South Philly Pizza, 3 stories, pats.	Brick Row with cornice	Very Good	Awning, vinyl
1175 S. 9th Street: empty, 3 stories, pats.	Brick row, projecting bay, cornice	Good	Canopy, metal
1173 S. 9th Street: empty, 3 stories, pats.	Brick row, projecting bay, cornice	Good	Canopy, metal
1171 S. 9th Street: Herbie Green's King of Toys: 2 stories, empty	Brick row	Good	Canopy, metal
1169 S. 9th Street: The Sewing Basket, 3 stories, pats.	Brick row, double front doors	Good	No, bricks need repointing
1167 S. 9th Street: empty, 3 stories, pats.	Yellow Brick	Good	Awning, torn to shreds
1165 S. 9th Street: Desanka Bakery, 3 stories, pats.	Aluminum siding	OK	Canopy, frame
1163 S. 9th Street: Office, 3 stories, pats.	Yellow brick, decorative cap	Good	Canopy and Awning
1161 S. 9th Street: empty, 3 stories, empty	Red brick, aluminum siding	Good	Canopy, metal
1159 S. 9th Street: Antique Shop, 3 stories, pats.	Garage door for store (stucco) and red brick	Good	Canopy and Awning
1157-1155 S. 9th Street: Wonlong Groceries (closed), 4 stories, pats.	Yellow brick with red brick behind	OK	Canopy, with cloth flaps
1153 S. 9th Street: empty, 3 floors, empty	Multi-color brick with cornice	OK	Canopy, metal
	projecting bay, red brick exposed		

Notes:



# Italian Market Building Survey

Date: Spring, 1998

Street: Ninth Street

Page: 89

Address and Store Name (if applicable)	Building Description	Status	Awning/Canopy
1151 S. 9th Street. LaRocca's Variety, 3 stories, empty	Brick row, needs repointing	Good	Canopy, metal
1149 S. 9th Street: empty, 2 stories, apts.	Yellow brick, decorative cap	OK	Frame
1147 S. 9th Street: Antique Shop, 3 stories, empty	Faux stone, projecting bay	OK	Frame, Awning (striped and torn)
1145 S. 9th Street. Shu's Grocery Store, 3 stories, apts.	Brick row, opening to sidewalk, projecting bays	Ok	Canopy, Awning (tiles on first floor)
1141 S. 9th Street: clothing store, 3 stories, apts.	Multi-color Brick, new	OK	Awning, vinyl
1139 S. 9th Street: MArYAnn's Creations, 3 stories, apts.	Brick, part of 1141 S. 9th	OK	Canopy, metal
1137 S. 9th Street: convenience store, 3 stories, apts.	Multi-color brick, new	OK	Canopy, metal
1135 S. 9th Street: housewares, 2 stories, empty	Brick row	OK	Canopy, metal
1133 S. 9th street: Old Engine House, 2 stories, empty	Brick factory, vents, windows sealed	OK	Partial canopy
1131-1109 S. 9th Street: Old Ice Building, 2 stories, empty	Brick factory, windows sealed	OK	Canopy, metals
Corner Building off 9th and Washington: Anastasi Seafood, 1 story	Use to be a restaurant, entirely open to sidewalk	OK	Canopy
1031 S. 9th Street: formerly Carl's Vineland Farm eggs, empty, 2 stories	Stucco, sealed	So-so	Canopy and Awnings
1029 S. 9th Street: Dango's Fish & Crab House, 2 stories, apts.	Multi-color brick, first floor open	Good	canopy
1027 S. 9th Street: store, 3 stories, apts.?	Yellow brick, first floor open	Good	canopy and awnings
1025-1021 S. 9th Street: clothing store, 3 stories, apts ?	Stucco, multi-color brick	Good	canopy and awnings
Front facade appears applied, but side alley reveals	red brick and painted signs	Photos	
1019 S. 9th Street: Cappuccio's Meats, 3 stories, empty	Faux stone, brick, cornice	Good	canopy and awnings
1017 S. 9th Street: empty, 3 stories, empty	Brick row, with partial cornice	So-so	No
1015 S. 9th Street: seafood store, 3 stories, empty	Yellow brick, no glass, sealed	So-so	canopy and awnings
1001 -1005 S. 9th Street: Esposito's Meats, 3 stories, apts.	Brick, scored stucco, cornice	Good	canopy and awnings

## Notes:







Figure A-1. Ninth Street Toward Carpenter Street, 1952 (Courtesy of Temple University Urban Archives, Philadelphia, PA)





Figure A-2: Italian Market before Easter Sunday, 1930's (Courtesy of Temple University Archives, Philadelphia, PA)





Figure A-3: South Philadelphia Vendor, 1978 (Courtesy of Temple University Urban Archives, Philadelphia, Pa)







A-4 1916 Hexamer Map (Courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia)







Figure A-5 1916 Hexamer Map (Courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia)



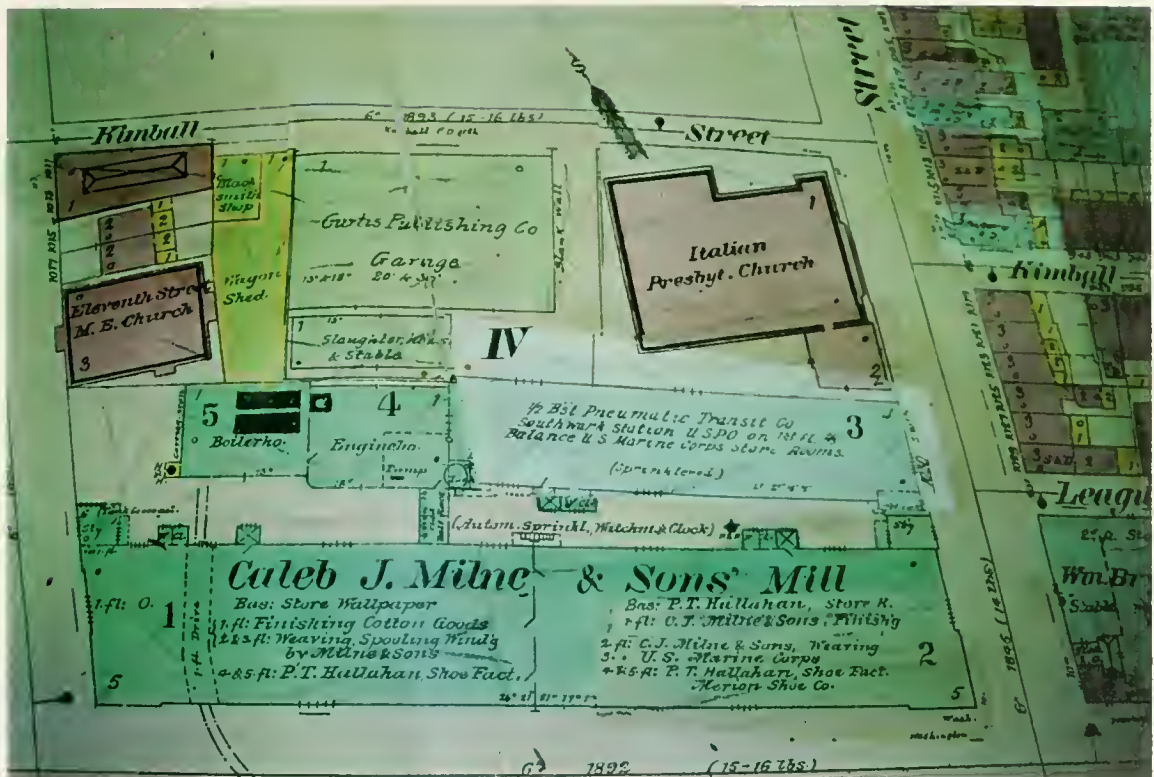


Figure A-6: 1916 Hexamer Map (Courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia)







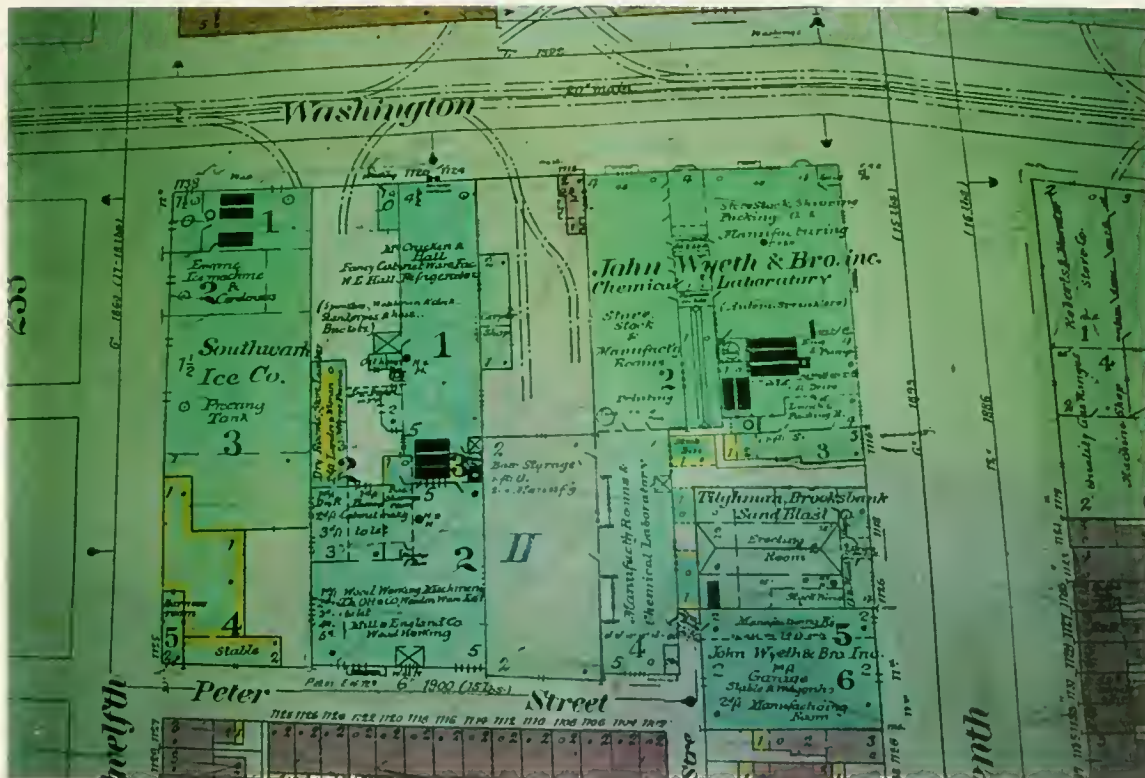


Figure A-7. 1916 Hexamer Map (Courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia)







Figure A-8: 1916 Hexamer Map (Courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia)







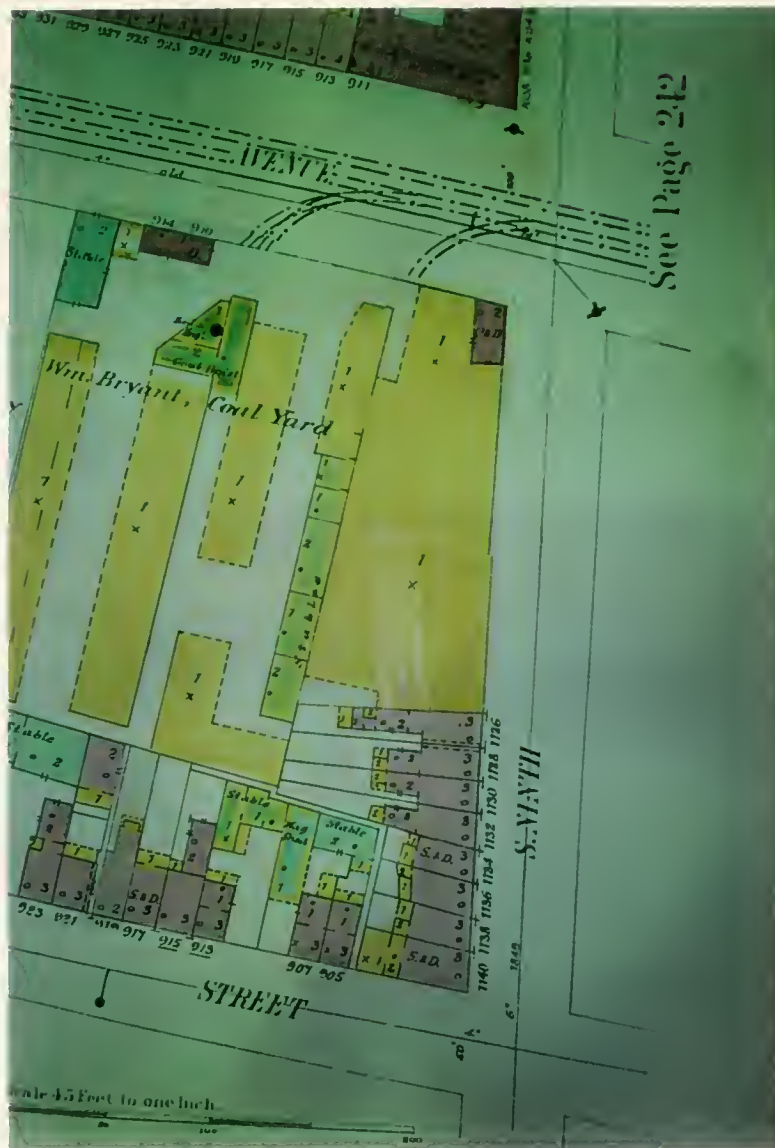


Figure A-10: 1888 Hexamer Map (Courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia)







Figure A-11: Detail of Side Wall at 1025-1021 S. Ninth Street







A-12: Details of side wall of 1025 - 1021 S. Ninth Street





Figure A-13: Details of side wall of 1025 - 1021 S Ninth Street







Figure A-14 Details of the side wall of 1025 - 1021 S Ninth Street





Figure A-15: Details of Cornice along Ninth Street







Figure A-16 Detail of Facade Materials along Ninth Street





Figure A-17: Cornice Detail along Ninth Street





Figure A-18: Detail of Cornice Along Ninth Street



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## **Index**

Assimilation - 9, 14, 23, 26

Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies - 27

Buildings (Physical Condition) - 25, 29, 30, 33, 35, 43 - 47, 66, 67, 72

Canopy/Awnings - 30, 41, 54, 55, 56, 63, 65, 67, 73

Chain Migration - 6

Chinatown - vii, 3, 76

City Planning Commission of Philadelphia - x, 7

Commercial Core - vii, 4, 20, 28, 30, 33, 69

Conservation Districts - 74-76

Cope Linder Associates - viii, 7, 55, 56, 58, 64, 65, 66

Ethnic/Immigrant Neighborhoods - ix, 2-6, 14, 23, 27, 37, 69, 70, 76

Facade Materials - 30, 31, 33, 35-38, 48, 62, 65

Historical Commission of Philadelphia - 65

“Immigrant Trail” - 76

Italian-Americans - vii, 4, 6-8, 24-28

Italian Colony - 16, 17, 19, 20

Italian Market Business Association - viii, 49, 55, 63, 67

Juliani, Richard - 6, 26

Keppel, Bob - 58, 67

Little Italy (NY) - 3, 62

Little Italy (PA) - 3, 9, 15, 21, 23

Long-Term Plan - 46, 50, 67, 70, 72, 73, 75, 77

Lower East Side Tenement Museum - 71

Mills, Sean - 56, 60, 73



“Mom and Pop” Shops - 1, 2, 69

1978 Plan for Italian Market - 49-51, 54, 55, 59, 60, 67, 77

National Register of Historic Places - 74

Philadelphia Commercial Development Corporation - 55, 65, 66

Refurbishment Plan (Canopy Feasibility Study) - viii, 7, 30, 49, 50, 55, 62, 67, 70, 72

Sicilians/Italians - vii, 1, 2, 5, 9, 10, 17, 76, 77

Tourists - 7, 77

Upper Floors of Buildings - viii, 29, 30, 32-35, 37, 43, 45, 47, 48, 60, 71, 72

Vacant Stores - 32, 43, 45, 46

Vendors - 3, 4, 10-13, 15, 19, 20, 40, 41, 49, 50, 51, 53, 56, 57, 59, 61, 63, 64, 67, 69, 72,  
73

Vernacular Architecture - vii, 35, 36, 62

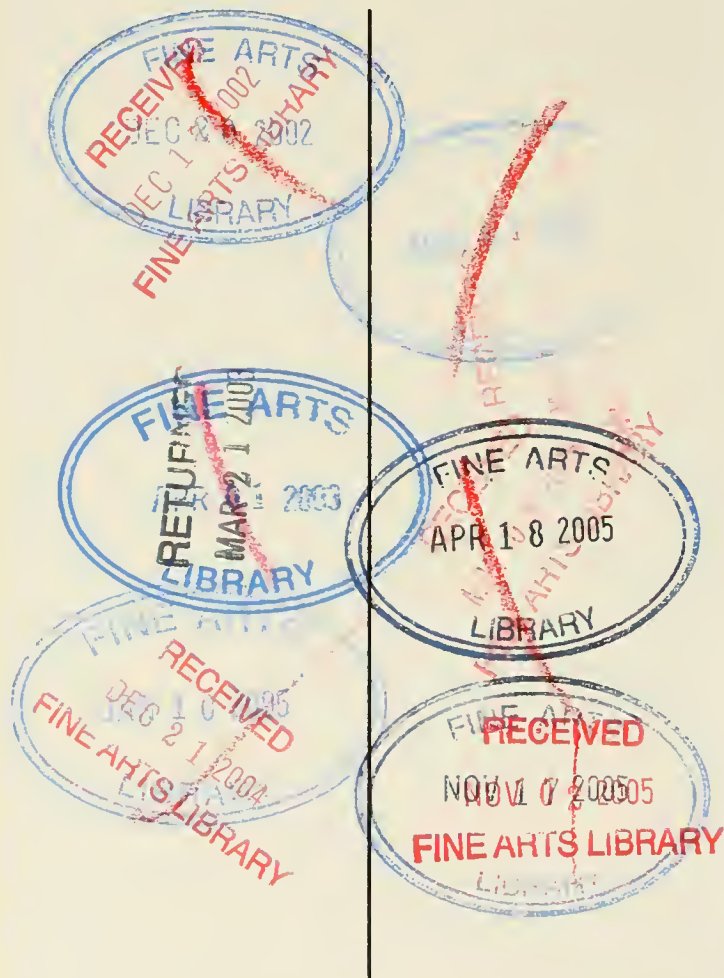
Villages in Italy - 5, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 20, 21





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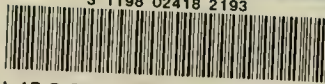
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